



Spain reduces Covid isolation period from ten to seven days

The rise in case numbers this week, driven by the Omicron variant, saw the 14-day rate per 100,000 in Malaga province breach 1,000

The national government agreed with Spain's regional governments this week to ease the number of days a positive coronavirus case has to quarantine for, due to fears of the knock-on effects on the economy of so many people off work.

Schools are due back the week after next and officials will meet again nationally on Tuesday to discuss whether any further measures need to be brought in for pupils and teachers.

Regionally, in Andalucía there were no new restrictions locally announced for the general public this week. **P7**

Look back on another eventful year in Malaga province with us as we review the highs and lows of 2021 **P2-6**

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A masked performer at the Verdiales competition on Tuesday. **SALVADOR SALAS**

Ancient folk tradition with a modern face

The Verdiales music and dance festival was held in Malaga this week for the 59th time

Elsewhere, many Costa del Sol towns are being forced to adjust or cancel their New Year's and Three Kings events

P8

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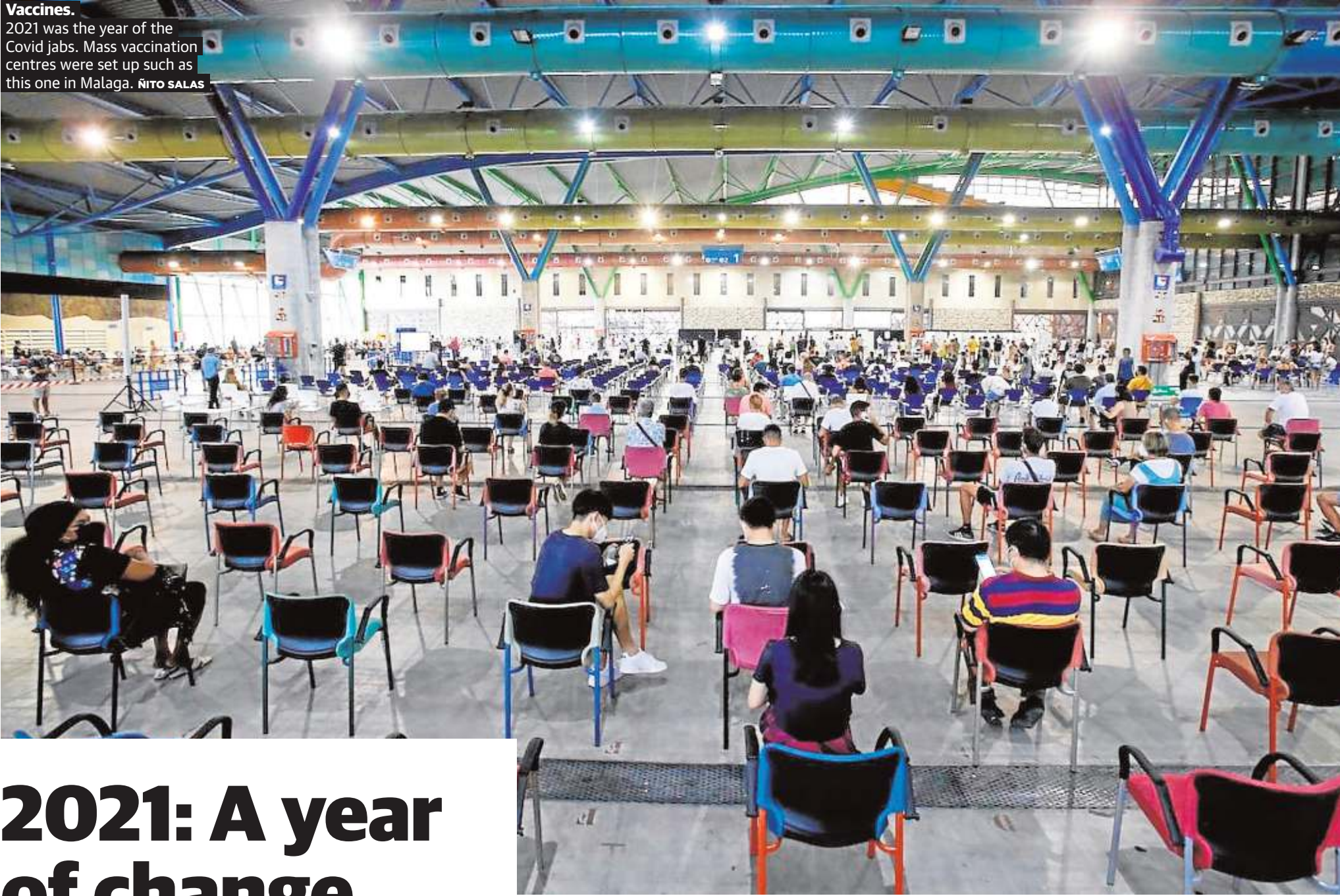
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Vaccines.
2021 was the year of the Covid jabs. Mass vaccination centres were set up such as this one in Malaga. **ÑITO SALAS**



2021: A year of change, tragedy and hope

A look back. While inevitably marked by the coronavirus pandemic, the last 12 months has brought us good and bad news on the Costa del Sol and beyond

TONY BRYANT
JENNIE RHODES
DEBBIE BARTLETT



The last 12 months have been eventful, with the news in southern Spain and the rest of the world dominated by the unshakeable shadow of Covid-19. As forest fires, a volcano, storms and drought all highlighted the delicate nature of our environment, the UK took its final step out of the EU. Life went on, however, with new projects announced, achievements and celebrations.

JANUARY

Brexit

Relief at the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement

After weeks of uncertainty, Spain-based Brexit campaign groups showed their relief at the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The transition out of the EU for the United Kingdom came to an end on 31 December 2020, and with it, the free movement of British citizens to live and work in Spain, unless they are official residents.

Although a deal was welcome, the organisation Brexipats claimed that it was not a cause for celebration.

Supply problems for shops selling British products

Supermarkets selling British products in the province reported problems with deliveries of frozen foods and fresh produce since 1 January, the day after the Brexit deal agreed on Christmas Eve came into force. The Food Co and Overseas Supermercados, which supply British products on the Costa del Sol and elsewhere in Spain, said they had been "forced" to start using local suppliers as they did not know how long the problem would last.

Violence

El Melillero arrested after Cártama acid attack

On 22 January police caught up with 'El Melillero', accused of throwing acid over his ex-girlfriend and her friend in Cártama earlier that month. The brutal attack put both women in hospital - the accused's ex-girlfriend with burns to half of her body.

Covid-19

Vaccine programme is rolled out as third wave takes hold

After a much publicised start at the very end of 2020, January saw the first Covid-19 jabs being given to residents in care homes and

frontline health workers. In February, the vaccine programme was extended to the over-80s living in the community. Now, at the end of the year, around 80% of the total population in Andalucía has been fully vaccinated.

FEBRUARY

Technology

First driverless bus hits the road in Malaga

The first electric-powered and autonomous bus service - that is, without the need for a driver - began a one-month trial period in Malaga on 20 February. Despite not being necessary, the vehicle - which was due to serve cruise passengers wishing to access the city centre - did have a driver at the controls for the tests. The city's mayor, Francisco de la Torre, who was present at the unveiling of the bus, pointed out that Malaga would be the first city in Europe where an autonomous bus would operate.

February 26

Disastrous tourism figures after year of pandemic

An examination of Andalusian



The Duke of Edinburgh. AFP



Prime minister Pedro Sánchez. EP



One of the first people to receive a Covid vaccine this year. SUR



An image taken during the Ceuta crisis. AFP



El Melillero. SALVADOR SALAS

tourism figures after almost one year of the pandemic showed the sector needed a drastic rescue plan to survive. The worst crisis ever to hit this industry had already eradicated 12,000 small and medium-sized businesses and

self-employed workers, because they were unable to carry on with so few tourists, according to the report by the Tourism Committee of the Confederation of Businesses in Andalucía (CEA). The figures showed that in 2020 the region

had only received 41 per cent of the number of tourists who came in 2019. This meant that income from tourism dropped by between 75 and 80 per cent, resulting in a loss of 16 billion euros.

MARCH

Covid-19
Restrictions eased as coronavirus case rates fell

The Andalusian government brought in some long-awaited tweaks to its general measures to curb the spread of coronavirus as case rates continued to fall, since the peak of the third wave at the end of January. Some non-essential businesses were allowed to stay open until 9.30pm in some districts, whereas others, with higher case rates had to stick to 6pm closing times. That month the night-time curfew was put back an hour from 10pm to 11pm. Lower case rates also meant changes to the capacities allowed in restaurants and venues, but the restrictions on movement between provinces and out of the region by land stayed in place.

Semana Santa
Malaga breaks 270-year Easter tradition

Andalucía had to put up with another year with no Holy Week processions in the streets, however some traditions did go ahead. Two people jailed for public health offences and one for robbery with force were freed by the Jesús El Rico brotherhood on the Wednesday of Holy Week. This was the first time in the 270 years of this tradition that three prisoners were freed, instead of one, under the privilege granted to the religious brotherhood by King Carlos III in

the 18th century.

APRIL

Crime
Marbella DJ killed by stray bullet at illegal party

Two German nationals were arrested in connection with the death of a 41-year-old DJ at an illegal party in Marbella in April. Officers believed the suspects were preparing to flee the country when they were detained. Forensic reports suggested that the death of the victim, José María Ares, was caused by a stray bullet after an argument broke out in an adjacent room to where the DJ was. The incident drew attention to the numbers of parties held in private villas, breaking Covid restrictions in force at the time.

Royals
Spanish royals mourn death of the Duke of Edinburgh

The death of the Duke of Edinburgh saw tributes paid from across the world, with a touching message coming from Spain's King Felipe and Queen Letizia. The Spanish King, who is related to the British monarch, invited British Ambassador to Spain Hugh Elliott to La Zarzuela palace in Madrid to further extend Spain's condolences. A gun salute performed by the Royal Gibraltar Regiment in honour of the Duke of Edinburgh also took place on the Rock.

Economy
Crisis aid for holiday accommodation sector

The Junta de Andalucía approved the first package of direct coronavirus crisis aid to the holiday accommodation sector; a measure that had been demanded by busi-

nesses in the region. The vice-president of the Junta and regional minister of Tourism, Juan Marín, announced that the regional government would give financial aid of 200 euros per hotel bed with a limit of 200,000 euros per establishment.

MAY

Covid-19
Spain's state of alarm comes to an end

The state of alarm declared by central government in the autumn of 2020 to enable Covid restrictions came to an end on Sunday 9 May. With it went the night curfew and the right to ban travel between regions, some of the few measures imposed by Pedro Sánchez's government for the whole of Spain. From then on, it was left to each region to decide on Covid measures although without the state of alarm, any rules affecting freedom of movement needed to be backed up by the courts.

Borders
Spain faces biggest migrant crisis as 8,000 enter Ceuta

From Sunday 16 to Tuesday 18 May, Spain witnessed a mass illegal entry of over 8,000 people from Morocco and sub-Saharan countries into the Spanish city of Ceuta on the North African coast. Eyewitnesses said that Moroccan border guards stood back from Sunday to Tuesday and allowed the illegal crossings, mostly by people wading or swimming through the sea around the fences into Spanish territory. The Spanish army was called in to control the situation.



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Transport. Cuts lead to crowded local trains. **ÑITO SALAS**



Pioneer. Cudeca founder Joan Hunt died in June. **SUR**



Rural energy. A protest against solar farms. **SUR**



Tragedy in the mountains. The Sierra Bermeja fire burning on the hillsides. **JON NAZCA/REUTERS**

JUNE

Travel

EasyJet opens base at Malaga airport and starts new routes

EasyJet marked the opening of its new operations base at Malaga-Costa del Sol Airport in early June with the arrival of one of three Airbus A-320s that the company would base on the Costa from March to October each year. The move would lead to the creation of up to 100 new jobs, all on local contracts, the company said.

Tourism

First cruise ship docks in Malaga since start of pandemic

On Tuesday 15 June, Malaga welcomed its first cruise ship in 15 months, with 1,270 eager passengers. Just before 6am the Mein Schiff 2, a cruise ship from the German arm of Tui, slipped into port. It was the first ship to dock in the normally busy cruise terminal since the start of the pandemic and was a welcome sight for many in the city. On board were over 1,200 German tourists who were on a specially prepared Covid-safe voyage, only stopping in Spanish ports.

Society

Cudeca founder Joan Hunt OBE dies, aged 92

Joan Hunt OBE, founder and honorary president of cancer hospice foundation Cudeca passed away on Thursday 24

June, aged 92. The British woman who founded the Cudeca cancer care charity died at the organisation's hospice in Benalmádena. Joan's husband Fred died of cancer just a few years after the couple retired to the Costa del Sol in 1984 and it was that experience that made her aware of the need for palliative care in the area and ignited her unwavering resolve to fill the gap.

Rural protests

Inland residents protest against solar energy plants

Residents in the Guadalhorce Valley, the Sierra de las Nieves and the Serranía de Ronda protested throughout this year against plans to build giant solar energy plants in rural areas. "Yes, to renewable energy, but not like that" is the slogan they have taken to protests locally and nationally, calling for more regulation of large-scale projects.

JULY

Tradition

Macharaviaya able to hold Fourth of July celebrations

The village of Macharaviaya held its annual Fourth of July celebrations for the first time in two years, in honour of Bernardo de Gálvez, the Spanish military leader who helped win the Battle of Pensacola during the American War of Independence and was born in the vil-

lage in 1746. As Covid-19 restrictions continued, the live event was only open to people from the village itself. However, it was streamed live on YouTube and included a live reenactment of the Battle of Pensacola by the association of grenadiers and dames of Gálvez (Orden de Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez) dressed in period costume,

Culture

Marenostrom Fuengirola holds concert experiment

On Sunday 25 July Marenostrom Fuengirola carried out an experiment with a major electronic music concert where up to 2,000 people could dance without having to maintain social distancing. It was called Castlepark and was the only festival approved in Andalucía at this time. Everyone attending had to be tested and was given appointments earlier in the day in marquees set up near the river. Over 1,700 tests were carried out and 33 people tested positive. Their details were notified to the health authorities. Those who tested negative were given a green wristband to wear,

AUGUST

Gastronomy

Annual espeto competition final takes place in Malaga

The final of the fourth edition

of the Ruta del Espeto, organised by SUR and sponsored by Sabor a Málaga and the Diputación provincial authority, was held in El Balneario in the city on Tuesday 3 August. The coveted award went to the Las Palmeras chiringuito and by public vote, La Cepa Playa. The crown for the best espeto was disputed between five establishments in the province. Each one had fifteen minutes to prepare two espetos that had to convince the jury composed of six professionals in the hospitality industry and chaired by SUR food critic, Enrique Bellver.

Music

Tom Jones performs to a seated audience at Starlite

Veteran Welsh singer Tom Jones filled the Marbella auditorium on Monday 16 August during the town's Starlite festival. Sir Tom, also known as the Welsh Tiger, opened up the proceedings with What's New Pussycat? Followed by It's Not Unusual. During the concert, which lasted over an hour and a half, Jones played all the classic hits and tracks from his latest and forty-fifth album, Surrounded by Time, to an audience that had to remain seated throughout.

International

Spain praised for handling of Afghan rescue operation

In August, the Spanish government won praise and support from the EU for its handling of the rescue operation from Afghanistan. On Saturday 21 August, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez was joined at the Torrejón de Ardoz airbase outside Madrid by the presidents of the European Commission and European Council, Ursula Von der Leyen and Charles Michel. The base was being used as a European hub for processing Afghan refugees. Andalucía's two American airbases, Morón de la Frontera and Rota, were used to temporarily house people who had supported the US in Afghanistan.

SEPTEMBER

Tragedy

Fire rages through Sierra Bermeja mountains

Nearly 1,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes after a wildfire broke out in Jubrique and Genalguacil in the Ronda mountains and spread down through the Sierra Bermeja, affecting parts of the municipalities of Estepona and Benahavís. The huge blaze was finally put out over six weeks later, by which time it had destroyed almost 9,600 hectares of land in Estepona, Casares, Jubrique, Júzcar, Genalguacil, Faraján and Benahavís and claimed the life of an Infoca firefighter.





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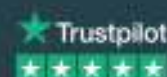
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La Viñuela. The reservoir is now below 20%. **ÑITO SALAS**



La Palma. The volcano was active between September and December. **EP**

Drought **Water level in La Viñuela reservoir dangerously low**

La Axarquía reservoir was only 23.2 per cent full after such a prolonged period of dry weather; the lowest it had been since 2008 when the level was similar and it was about to be declared a dead reservoir, something that was averted thanks to heavy rain in the autumn. However, the Junta

de Andalucía insisted that there would be no cuts to domestic supply on this occasion.

Nature **Volcano erupts on La Palma, in the Canary Islands**

Molten lava continued to pour down the mountainside from La Cumbre Vieja volcano after it erupted for the first time in 50 years on 19 September, and resi-

dents of towns and villages in its path had to leave their homes. By the time the eruption was officially declared over on Christmas Day, it had destroyed over 3,000 properties and hundreds of hectares of farmland.

OCTOBER

Covid-19 **Andalucía returns to in-person GP appointments**

Andalucía became the first region in Spain to bring back the opportunity for patients to see a doctor in person at its public health centres on 1 October. However, the option remained for telephone consultations and requests for repeat prescriptions.

Transport **Disruption to rail services due to strikes and driver shortages**

Users of the Costa del Sol's Cercanías train lines saw their journeys disrupted when services were cancelled without warning due to driver shortages. Passengers, especially on the C-1 Málaga to Fuengirola line, which is used by 30,000 people a day, expressed their mounting frustration, some saying that the service had deteriorated over the last year. These disruptions were in addition to numerous AVE high speed and long distance train services that were cancelled due to a strike by drivers.

Wildlife **One of the world's smallest ruminants born at Bioparc**

Bioparc Fuengirola proudly announced the birth of a mouse-deer; one of the smallest ruminants in the world. It weighed in at 300 grammes, and is no larger than a smartphone. Within a few hours of being born these animals are able to stand up, walk, and even jump, and in just four months they reach sexual maturity. The adults reach barely 20 centimetres tall and weigh just over one kilo.

Health **Work resumes on the Costa del Sol Hospital extension**

The long-awaited restart of works to extend the Costa del Sol Hospital in Marbella, came in October 11 years after the activity came to a halt. At a cost of more than 75 million euros, the new wing of the hospital could open mid-2023.

NOVEMBER

Environment **End in sight for sewage in the Guadalhorce river**

The Junta de Andalucía awarded the contract for the biggest sewage treatment project still outstanding in Málaga province: the metropolitan plant which was con-

ceived 15 years ago to stop sewage being released into the Guadalhorce river from Alhaurín el Grande and Cártama. These are the two biggest places in Andalucía which lack sewage treatment facilities, and every year 5.9 cubic hectometres of waste end up in the principal river in Málaga province. This is the equivalent of 1,750 Olympic-size swimming pools. The plant will cost 105 million euros to build and will not be ready until 2025.

Tourism **New company appointed to run the Caminito del Rey**

It was announced that a consortium formed by construction company Sando, Salzillo Servicios Integrales and Mundo Management would be taking over the running of one of Málaga province's major tourist attractions, the Caminito del Rey walkway - which is suspended some 100-metres in the air above a river gorge. The new management - said it would keep the ticket price the same, at 10 euros.

Archaeology **Roman ovens uncovered by storm at San Pedro**

Severe storms which caused damage to numerous areas of the coast proved lucky for historians and archaeologists: the wrath of the waves unearthed two ovens, presumably from Roman times, near the paleochristian basilica of Vega del Mar, in the dunes of El Ingenio, in San Pedro.

DECEMBER

Charity **Cudeca cancer foundation hit by wave of shoplifting**

The Cudeca foundation reported that its 25 charity shops are losing an estimated 4,000 euros a month because of an increase in shoplifting. They have always suffered some petty theft, but the problem has worsened recently, especially in Málaga city.

Culture **Málaga confirmed as candidate for Expo 2027**

Málaga city has officially become Spain's only candidate to host Expo 2027, something the mayor, Francisco de la Torre, has been pushing for since 2019. At the time the announcement was made, the only confirmed rival to host Expo 2027 was the American city of Bloomington, in Minnesota, although others may emerge before the closing date for applications next month.

Politics **All change at Torremolinos town hall**

Margarita del Cid, of the Partido Popular, was installed as the new mayor of Torremolinos after a vote of no confidence in the PSOE's José Ortiz, who described the motion as "an attack on democracy". The vote passed by 13 votes to 12.



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Spain's Health ministry cuts the Covid-19 quarantine period to seven days in face of Omicron

Several regions, including Madrid, had called for the isolation period to be reduced to five days

SUR

MADRID. The national ministry of Health and the Spanish regional governments agreed on Wednesday this week to reduce the quarantine period for people who test positive for Covid-19 from ten to seven days. Politicians had been concerned that the high number of Omicron cases off work would harm the economy needlessly.

The measure, adopted unanimously, went against the position of some scientific advisers, who were against reducing the isolation period and advised keeping it at ten days.

Similarly, unvaccinated individuals who have been in close contact with a positive have also had their isolation period shortened to seven days, compared to the ten at present. It had already



Carolina Darias, Spain's minister for Health explains the change. EFE

been established that those fully vaccinated who were in close contact with a positive infection did not have to quarantine.

Several regions, such as Madrid, had expressed their wish that the isolation of those who tested positive for Covid-19 be reduced to five days.

Back to school concerns

With Covid-19 cases rising rap-

idly - due to the milder but more contagious Omicron variant - next Tuesday the central government will meet to consider how to manage the return to school after the holidays.

Extra measures are not expected to be brought in, such as reduced class sizes, but existing measures, such as mask wearing and extra ventilation, may be enforced more strictly.

Case rates continue to soar locally but no more new restrictions for now

Despite Malaga being moved up to Level 2 health alert by the Junta, pressure on hospital beds was still under control this week

SUR

MALAGA. With rules already in place on mask wearing nationwide and Covid-19 passports in use to enter venues regionally, there were no restrictions announced on top of these for the general public in Andalucía this week. This was despite a continuing surge in case rates locally.

On Thursday this week (30 December), the rolling 14-day case rate per 100,000 in the Andalucía region was 1,093, a rise of 100 points in one day alone. In Malaga province itself - including the Costa del Sol - it was 1,047, a rise of 78 points on the day before.

The situation in local hospitals - a key indicator of whether more restrictions will be neces-

sary - remained significantly better, however, than previous waves of coronavirus.

Nine per cent of ICU beds

While daily new cases were up 87 per cent in a week by this Thursday in Malaga province, there were 246 in local hospitals, up 34 per cent in a week and 45 in intensive care, up 33 per cent. Some 9 per cent of local intensive-care beds had Covid-19 patients.

The Junta de Andalucía agreed this week to raise the Covid health alert to Level 2 in all the health districts of Malaga province. However, this did not imply new capacity or opening hour limits of shops, hospitality, nightlife and other activities.

Boosters were so far being offered to those aged 58 upwards in Andalucía jabbed with AstraZeneca or Janssen this week, as the roll-out continued.

To follow detailed local data on case rates in your area and other figures around Covid-19:
www.surinenglish.com

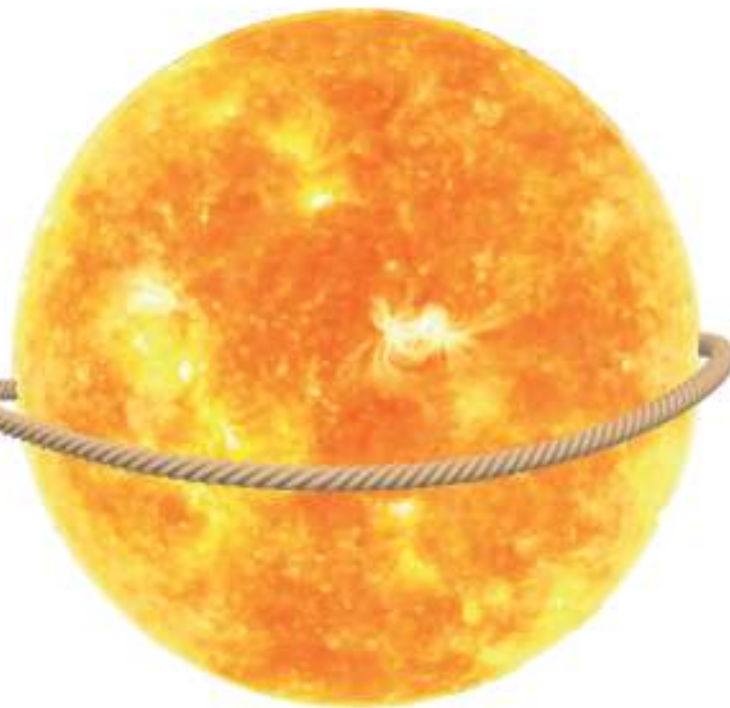
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One of the verdiales bands at the event in Puerto de la Torre on Tuesday. **SALVADOR SALAS**

Joy as the celebration of a music and dance tradition unique to Malaga returns

The festival of the ancient Verdiales, a custom originating in the mountains close to the city, was cancelled last year due to Covid-19

J. SOTO / N. HESKETH

MALAGA. The annual Christmas festival of Malaga's distinctive Verdiales folk music and dance took place in the city suburb of Puerto de la Torre on Tuesday this week.

"This is the most special day of the year," beamed Antonio Pozo - who goes by the nickname of Panchurro and at 91 is the

oldest of the regular participants in this Fiesta Mayor de Verdiales event.

Verdiales is an ancient, rural music and dance tradition originating in the mountains surrounding Malaga and in the Axarquía. It is still practised competitively today.

At this week's events, 12 of the groups - which are known as pandas - covering the three traditional styles, (Montes, Almogía and Comares), took part.

Panchurro used to play cymbals in the Santa Catalina panda, which adopts the Montes style of performance, but after a fall several years ago, he has moved on to singing to the violin.

"This fiesta gives me a dose of life; I've been enjoying the Verdiales since I was little," he explained.

This was the 59th time the festival was held and this year there was even more enthusiasm as the Covid-19 pandemic had halted it in 2020. Almost 5,000 euros in prize money was up for grabs and for the first time a special auditorium built for the occasion was being used.

Ahead of the start of the performances, Malaga Mayor Francisco de la Torre said how pleased he was to see them all there. "I have always felt that [the Verdiales] are so 'malagueño' and so part of us," he added.

Eve event tonight (31 December).

In Estepona, next week's Three Kings event will be static this year - with no parade - with the floats lined up to view on the 5th on the seafront. Marbella's and San Pedro's will also be static.

Inland Ronda will still hold its parade but it has lengthened and widened the route for the floats and participants.

Ronda is also expected still to be the venue for the broadcast on Canal Sur regional television of the chimes at midnight tonight.

Torremolinos is another town that has replaced moving floats with static ones. The Three Kings: Melchior, Gaspar and Balthasar will be in three separate tents on Costa del Sol, Andalucía and Pablo Ruiz Picasso squares.

January would still go ahead for the moment.

Tickets for the reserved seating area in the middle part of the route went on sale on Thursday this week but with a reduced capacity.

Elsewhere on the Costa, different municipalities have been making adjustments to their festive plans to follow official advice.

Estepona, Fuengirola, Torremolinos, Coin and Alhaurín de la Torre are among many other places to halt their New Year's

HERE AND THERE

MIJAS

Fines on way for owners not rinsing off dog urine

I. GELIBTER. First it was Torremolinos, Benalmádena and Ronda; and now the war against dog pee has reached Mijas, the fourth major town in the province that is going to force dog owners to clean up after their pets.

Mijas council has confirmed that a measure to make owners dilute the urine of their pets on the street is being considered and could take effect within weeks.



Washing down will be a rule. **SUR**

COSTA DEL SOL

EasyJet to expand routes to UK in 2022

SUR. British airline easyJet has announced plans to strengthen its route network in Spain for summer 2022. In line with its sustained growth strategy in Malaga, the company will offer three new routes to the UK. During the summer period next year it will have two new planes based on the Costa del Sol, making a total of five.

The three new routes for easyJet's base in Malaga, which was only opened last June, will link the Costa with London Southend, Birmingham and Edinburgh airports, increasing the total number of routes from Malaga to 17.

Operating from the start of May, the London Southend connection will operate six times a week, Birmingham four and Edinburgh three times a week.

Next summer, easyJet will have five planes based in Malaga and seven in Palma de Mallorca, which will bring the number of aircraft in Spain to 17, counting the five that the company will have at its other base in Barcelona.

LAS LAGUNAS

New, large car park to ease local problems

I. G. A new underground car park in the Las Lagunas area of Mijas Costa is to open in the next few weeks, Mijas council have said. Some eight million euros is being spent on the La Candelaria project, which is next to key public facilities in the area alongside the border with Fuengirola and where it is notoriously difficult to park. Mijas wants to add 1,200 new spaces in Las Lagunas area in total.

MALAGA

City port set to welcome 293 cruises next year

P. MARTÍNEZ. Malaga city's port is set to welcome 293 cruises next year, more than the year before the pandemic. This will include the arrival of 32 ships that have never visited the capital of the Costa del Sol before.

The cruise industry was one of the last sectors to resume activity after the worldwide coronavirus crisis broke out. But the implementation of strict health protocols has allowed it to reach cruising speed very quickly.

So much so that Malaga is looking forward to a busy 2022. In the year before the pandemic there were 288 cruise ships loaded with tourists that called in the city, the Port Authority stated.

Alongside this, one of the largest shipping companies, MSC Cruises, has announced plans to reinforce its presence in Malaga. The city will be the embarkation port during the summer season for a new 11-day cruise itinerary through the Western Mediterranean from June to October. It will be operated by the MSC Orchestra, with the capacity to carry 3,223 passengers.



Mijas officials with builders. **SUR**

SUR

MALAGA. The surge in Covid-19 case rates is forcing many places along the Costa del Sol and across the province to curtail their New Year and Three Kings celebrations over the coming days.

Malaga city took the decision last week to call off the annual New Year's Eve event in the Plaza de la Constitución, while also saying that the hugely popular Three Kings parade on the evening of 5

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COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Johanna (R) with friend Eva delivering the parcels last week. **SUR**

Caring gesture brings festive joy to Malaga children's home

MALAGA

An initiative organised by a British expat ensured that every child at the Ciudad de los Niños home received a Christmas parcel

TONY BRYANT

A caring British expat has raised over 6,300 euros in her bid to ensure that every child at the Ciudad de los Niños Malaga children's home received a Christmas gift this year.

Johanna Grey, who has lived in Mijas for more than 20 years, came up with the idea after vis-

iting the home earlier this month to give the 49 children currently residing there an advent calendar.

Johanna was given a tour of the home, and although she had "nothing but admiration" for the staff and the care offered to the children, she felt that she needed to "do all that was possible to show these children that there are people thinking of them."

"A lovely lady called Lola took the time to show us around. She has worked at the centre for 30 years and told us about the children and how they have ended up there. They do an absolutely fantastic job at the home, but the children are lacking basic

things, so I decided to try to help by organising a GoFundMe page, Johanna told SUR in English.

Johanna, along with the help of her friend Eva, began to rally support for the initiative, and, to their surprise, the GoFundMe page amassed more than 3,300 euros in two weeks.

Anonymous donation

However, Johanna was even more overwhelmed when she received a large donation that almost doubled the fund from a British pensioner who wished to remain anonymous.

"We were astonished by the generosity of people, especially considering that we are in the middle of a crisis. One person, who does not want to be named, very kindly gave us 3,000 euros. We thought that this was far too much, but the lady concerned said that one of the things she wanted to do before she died was to help a children's home," Johanna explained.

Johanna was advised by the staff at the home that she should buy each child the same present, so she decided to make 49 parcels containing essential clothing and toiletries, and a 40-euro gift voucher, which were delivered to the children on Christmas Eve.

However, the fund has more than 3,000 euros left over, so Johanna has decided to use this money to take the children on excursions next year. She also intends to set up a helpline, because she feels that the children need extra support and advice when they leave the home at the age of 18.

"It hurts me to think that these children do not have parents to look after them. I have decided to show them that there are people who do care and want to help," Johanna said.

Dorothy Allen with Miguel Benítez at the Solidaria food bank. **SUR**

Nerja Royal British Legion donates toys for Christmas to local food bank

NERJA

J. RHODES. The Nerja branch of the Royal British Legion (RBL) donated a total of 73 Christmas gifts to the town's Solidaria food bank last week.

President of the food bank,

Miguel Benítez, was on hand to receive them.

The toys will be distributed to local children of families with limited resources over the festive period.

Dorothy Allen from the RBL, who delivered the toys to the food bank, explained, "Some toys were donated by friends of mine from Urbanisation Punta Lara, Torrox and Cómpeta and some came from members of the British Legion." She added, "What a wonderful response."

Over 100 guests attended the charity event in Calahonda. **SUR**

Animal shelter marks anniversary with festive fundraising event

MIJAS

T. BRYANT. The ACE/SHIN animal shelter in La Cala de Mijas celebrated its 22nd anniversary with a Christmas fundraising event at the Los Olivos restaurant last week.

More than 100 people at-

tended the party, which raised over 3,000 euros to help the charity care for more than 250 dogs and 150 cats currently awaiting adoption at the shelter.

The evening began with a three-course dinner, followed by live entertainment supplied by Costa favourite Laura Elen.

A charity raffle and auction offered prizes donated by local businesses and individuals, while Ibex Insurance, who sponsored the event, raised an extra 165 euros by raffling a festive hamper.



Collective Calling on Santa duty

Marbella-based charity Collective Calling collected presents and delivered them to underprivileged families in El Ángel before Christmas. They also staged a nativity play for the families and their children.

Brave bathers take part in Boxing Day swim for charity

SOTOGRANDE

ASH MAER. A Polar Swim from the Bunker Bar in Sotogrande on Boxing Day has raised 220 euros for charity. Around 40 people braved the cold to raise


Some of the chilly dippers. **SUR**

the funds for the St George Christmas Feed a Family campaign. Expat Jo Jo France, who organised the swim, said: "It was a roaring success."

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La Cañada
SHOPPING



The King of Spain during his broadcast from the Zarzuela Palace. **EP**

King gives message of hope over Covid-19 in traditional Christmas speech to the nation

MADRID

Felipe VI avoided any direct mention of his father, King Juan Carlos, who is still self-exiled in Abu Dhabi amid doubts about his financial affairs

SUR

In his Christmas Eve speech to the nation, King Felipe VI once again reaffirmed his commitment to being “an example of public and moral integrity” at a difficult time for the institution he represents.

The monarch also focused a good part of his speech from Madrid’s Zarzuela Palace on the Co-

vid-19 pandemic, conveying a message of encouragement and hope. “We must continue to be careful, protect ourselves and act with the greatest individual and collective responsibility,” he said.

Although King Felipe did not directly mention his father by name, he appeared to reference emeritus king Juan Carlos I, who left Spain for Abu Dhabi in 2020 amid doubts over his financial affairs and private life.

King Felipe said, “We must be in a situation that constitutionally corresponds to us; assume, each one of us, the obligations we have been entrusted with; respect and comply with the laws and be an example of public and moral integrity.”



La Palma volcanic eruption officially declared to be over

The volcanic eruption on the Canary Island of La Palma was officially declared over on Christmas Day. During its three months of activity, the Cumbre Vieja volcano forced the evacuation of some 7,000 residents. 2,329 properties were lost under rivers of lava, earth and rocks spewed out by the volcano - 1,219 hectares were covered. This was the longest ever eruption recorded on the island.

Temporary extension to validity of UK licences is agreed until end of February while long-term negotiations continue

SPAIN

SUR. The grace period in force since Brexit for UK driving licences held by residents in Spain to be recognised as valid has been extended to 28 February 2022, the British Embassy in Madrid said this week.

This new, temporary extension applies while negotiations between London and Madrid continue for a formal process to swap a UK licence to a Spanish one.

Many British expats who failed to exchange their UK licences under easier pre-Brexit

rules, are eagerly awaiting any long-term deal to avoid having to take a driving test to get a Spanish licence and continue to drive.

“As you know, the UK Government is committed to reach-

This does not affect holidaymakers; visitors to Spain can continue to use their UK licence to drive just as before Brexit

ing a long-term agreement with Spain so that residents can exchange their UK driving licences without taking a test.

“Negotiations are continuing and we stand ready to conclude that agreement as soon as possible. But unfortunately we are not there yet,” the embassy posted on its BritsinSpain Facebook page.

“We recognise the extension is relatively short, and therefore it is important that - if it is imperative for you to drive - you consider all your options, which may include looking into taking a driving test now,” it added.

This does not affect holidaymakers; visitors to Spain can continue to use their UK licence to drive just as before Brexit. An International Driving Permit is not required.

THE EURO ZONE MARK NAYLER

Garbage disposal



After resolving a seemingly irrelevant dispute with opposition parties about Netflix, Spain’s coalition government this week managed to secure approval for its 2022 budget, in which the first tranche of post-Covid EU funds will be deployed. Though unprecedentedly generous in its public spending, the blueprint’s contents were never especially controversial, unlike those of a decree also issued this week,

which is likely to have a tougher time in congress early next year.

There was certainly haggling over the 2022 spending plan, but it wasn’t generated by debate about the document’s fiscal proposals. Rather, pro-independence parties such as Catalonia’s ERC and the Basque country’s EH Bildu know they can charge a price for their votes in congress, even if they’re in concord with what the government’s trying to do. Hence the squabble over Net-

flix content referred to earlier - an issue that has nothing whatsoever to do with the budget.

Spain’s opposition parties are probably also reluctant to be seen as blocking the disbursement of Brussels’ Covid hand-outs, even if a lot of that money is going to projects that are, at best, only tenuously to do with post-pandemic recovery. The result of this cross-party wrangling, at least for Catalonia’s separatists, has been a resounding success: the wealthy northeasterly region will receive an even bigger chunk of state expenditure in 2022 than it did this year, and its leading separatists, despite only occupying twelve seats in congress, have once again played the role of kingmakers.

Also approved this week - although only by the cabinet, not

congress - are the government’s long-awaited reforms to the labour market. Unveiled at the last minute, just before the end-of-year deadline specified by the EU, these are the creation of employment minister and second deputy prime minister Yolanda Díaz, whose future and reputation hinges on their success. Unlike the budget, though, this far-reaching legislation is likely to generate disagreement and discord in parliament, even amongst an opposition as subdued as Spain’s.

Díaz’s proposed reforms are the first substantial, potentially long-lasting, piece of legislation formulated by the government of which she is part. Perhaps most significantly, she has given more negotiating power to the unions, greatly reduced under the previ-

ous Conservative administration of Mariano Rajoy, and put a three-month limit on temporary contracts, which currently account for one in every four signed in Spain. In a memorable soundbite, Díaz dedicated her flagship changes to the women and young people in Spain “who have never in their lives known a contract that wasn’t garbage”.

There’s one final hurdle for Díaz to jump before her labour reforms become part of Spain’s legislative machinery, and that’s a vote in congress next month. Expect resistance from Pablo Casado’s Popular Party (the party responsible for the very reforms Díaz is reversing) and perhaps from centrist Ciudadanos, too. And perhaps also from kindred spirits on the left, keen to extract a fee for their support.

2021 in Gibraltar, a year marked by highs and lows

The relationship with EU, new airlines and flights to UK and, of course, the coronavirus pandemic, have made this year a rollercoaster for the Rock

DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. In the future, looking back, 2021 will be remembered as a year full of stops and starts, of highs and lows, of excitement and disappointments, many of them the result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The year began on a very positive note, with the announcement that the governments of Gibraltar, UK and Spain had signed a last-minute agreement-in-principle in the early hours of New Year's Eve, which would form the framework for negotiations over Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU. It caused widespread astonishment because it included the ambitious proposal that Gibraltar would have tailormade access to the Schengen area, thereby eliminating border problems caused by Brexit.

At the time, it was hoped that everything could be finalised in six months, but the EU was not able to confirm its negotiating mandate until October, so the talks will now continue into 2022, although it is hoped that the new Treaty will be possible by Easter. However, the Gibraltar govern-

ment is still making it clear that an agreement with the EU is by no means guaranteed.

There was also excitement at the announcement in February that Eastern Airways was to start running twice-weekly flights

from Southampton and Birmingham in May, but by October the airline had announced that it was discontinuing them during the winter due to uncertainty, and in December Wizz Air also dropped its Luton route.



Winter flights cancelled. SUR

Gibraltar made a name for itself worldwide for its excellent vaccine roll-out this year and its subsequent successful booster campaign but unfortunately, like everywhere else, Covid-19 has proven a formidable enemy and Gibraltar ends the year mourning the loss of 100 of its people from the virus.

Nevertheless, a new year always marks a fresh start, and there is plenty of optimism on the Rock that 2022 will bring good news and positivity.

The number of Covid-19 cases rises in Gibraltar, but few people need hospital treatment

D. BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. Yesterday the total number of active cases of Covid-19 in Gibraltar had risen to 557, of whom 541 are residents and 16 are visitors. Although no exact figure for the number of people who have the Omicron variant was given on Thursday, the previous day the figure was reported to be 168. There was one person in the Critical Care unit, but no patients in the hospital Covid ward and no cases in Elderly Residential Services. A further 796 people are in self-isolation.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Gibraltar has carried out 447,487 tests and there have been 8,533 cases of Covid-19 on the Rock.

A large advertisement for McArthur Glen Designer Outlet. It features a woman with blonde hair, wearing a white turtleneck sweater, laughing joyfully. She is holding several handbags: a large brown one, a black one, and a small brown one. The background is a solid light blue. To the right of the woman, the text 'winter SALE' is written in a mix of black and red fonts. Below this, it says 'Step into even bigger savings on our outlet prices.' At the bottom right, the 'McArthur Glen Designer Outlet' logo is displayed, with 'Málaga' written below it. At the bottom left, there is a QR code, a 'SHOP SAFER' logo, and the website 'mcarthurglenmalaga.com'.

Global computer chip shortage stalls the new car market in Spain

Around 150,000 people are waiting, in some cases up to six months, for their new vehicle to be delivered

IGNACIO LILLO

MALAGA. About 4,000 people in Malaga province alone are waiting for new cars to be delivered. The global shortage of computer microchips means the delay many customers face can add up to six months, or even more in some cases.

The worldwide shortage is affecting almost all motor manufacturers, although to a lesser extent those in Asia. "I signed the contract in November but they have told me that it will not be delivered until at least April," one man from Malaga told SUR.

The worst thing, in his case, is that his old vehicle had suffered a serious breakdown and he sent it straight to the scrapyard, "so until they get me the new one I have to share a car with the rest of

the family," he said. As a short-term solution he even considered something secondhand but was "surprised" that the prices of used vehicles "have skyrocketed".

Six months

After successive costly breakdowns, María Ruiz, a bank employee, went to a dealership and chose a new model that had just arrived on the market. "From the outset, they recommended one with fewer extras because the top-of-the-range model would take at least six months to arrive," she explained. Initially she was told the wait would be four months, but recently the dealership called her to say it would be delayed longer. Her problem is that she had already sold her old vehicle and now she is carless.

No deliveries for months

Although there is no official data, Carlos Oliva, president of Malaga's association of motor dealers, estimates that between 3,000 and 4,000 cars are currently on order and waiting to reach their own-



A salesperson shows a new vehicle at a dealership on the Costa del Sol. S. SALAS (FILE PHOTO)

Overall, Korean, and some Japanese and American manufacturers are coping with the crisis better than Europeans

ers in the province. The number nationally is around 150,000 undelivered units. "There are manufacturers that have not been able to deliver a car for several months," he acknowledged.

"There are plants with car

parks full of unfinished vehicles with their chips missing and they have stopped production."

Asian manufacturers coping

Overall, Korean, and some Japanese and American manufacturers are coping with the crisis better than Europeans because they have more access to microprocessor production.

Juan Peña, boss of the Ford Garam dealership in Malaga, admits they have 250 cars sold pending delivery, which are expected during the early part of 2022: "Some take longer than others."

However, this manager is optimistic and in the case of Ford, he said that production has already recovered, after it increased the microchip supply capacity.

However, Carlos Oliva is not so optimistic and estimated that the supply crisis will last at least until the summer of next year, when it will begin to stabilise and return to normal in early 2023.

"To everyone who wants to buy a car, I recommend that you make the decision a few months in advance because it will be very difficult to find something to your liking with immediate delivery."

THE SPECTRUM IFA GROUP



Jeremy Ferguson. SUR

CAN YOU BELIEVE IT'S ALMOST A YEAR SINCE BREXIT HAPPENED?

MARBELLA

Jeremy Ferguson. None of us who live here really knew what to expect when the clocks passed midnight on the 31st of December last year. Was it going to be the same as everyone feared was going to happen with the year 2000? All of the world's computers were going to fail, planes were going to crash, cashpoints weren't going to let you have your money and on and on the scaremongering went.

And, nothing happened, or virtually nothing. Life went on as normal and all of that worry was for nothing.

Brexit was also being written about in the press in a similar fashion, with a big 'fear factor' going on. What was life going to be like after the dreaded departure from the European Union? Well, in all fairness, this time there was probably a bit more of an actual issue than the year 2000 fears, particularly for those of us who are British, and live here in Spain.

My first experience was the fact my new born son, who arrived in January in Marbella, was issued with a blue passport. That certainly brought back memories for me, but at the same time made me feel a little sad, as I had always seen so many positives associated with being a member of the European Union. For one, it had enabled me

to move easily to Spain with my family many years ago, and work with very little red tape or hassle involved.

My second experience was a courier standing at my front door asking me for money for a pair of shoes I bought online and had already paid for in the UK. I refused to pay and therefore he left with my shoes! I've no idea what ever happened to them in the end, but the suppliers told me they were going to set up in Germany to avoid the same issue for its European customers, and thankfully reimbursed me in full.

The third experience occurred when speaking with clients who were looking to move here from the UK to retire, and live the dream many of us are all too familiar with. That's when the real shock of the effect of leaving the European Union started to sink in. The first thing was having to explain to people that the first point of call would have to be an appointment at one of three Spanish embassies in the UK. This would entail having to providing lots of details, and in particular proving your financial wellbeing, not just for now, but showing the ability to cover the next five years. On top of that, you have to have private health care cover with no excess due on the policy when making a claim. Once

you have done all of that you then have to apply for your TIE card when you arrive, another process that takes time.

So for most of us, the reality is the midnight hour of the 31st of December 2020 was far more significant than that of the year 2000.

My working day changed significantly this year. So much of my time is now spent assisting people with their plans to move to Spain from the UK, and trying to get things as clear as possible when it comes to their finances and income. I do my best to take as much stress out of it as I can with the team of people I have helping me, and if you were one of those people we helped this year, it was a pleasure. If you are thinking about sorting your finances out from a Spanish perspective now you are here, you know where I am, and if you get in touch I will do my utmost to explain things and help.

Have a lovely Christmas and New Year.

THE SPECTRUM IFA GROUP

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DIPUTACIÓN DE JAÉN



Diputación de Jaén

OleotourJaén: discover the world of olives and oils

OleotourJaén provides travellers with unique experiences centred around olive groves and olive oil

JAÉN

SUR. The more than 66 million olive trees that dot the Jaén countryside make this inland province of Andalusia a unique place in the world to admire the landscape, immerse yourself in the millenary culture of the olive grove and taste the best extra-virgin olive oil on the planet. Jaén is undoubtedly the ideal place to enjoy a wide range of experiences that have been grouped together by the Provincial Council of Jaén to form an interesting tourist product: OleotourJaén, which allows travellers to enjoy a wide range of activities and options related to olive groves and olive oil.

Through the more than one hundred resources that make up this tourist product - www.oleotourjaen.es - ranging from restaurants and oil mills that can be visited to spas, unique accommodation, oil mills, cosmetics companies, tourist services, EVOO tasting, museums and interpretation centres, olive wood crafts companies and unique farmhouses and spaces; travellers

will have the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge of the culture of olive groves and olive oil, which permeates each and every one of the municipalities of Jaén.

OleotourJaén gives travellers the chance to wander amongst centuries-old olive trees on foot or on horseback; stay in old farmhouses, country estates or rural houses that have preserved their traditional architecture; savour the best extra-virgin olive oils in the world or taste, thanks to Jaén's talented chefs, excellent dishes made with this ingredient that is an essential part of the Mediterranean diet, declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Furthermore, visitors can learn about the production and elaboration process of extra-virgin olive oil at olive mills and cooperatives; purchase this product which has many beneficial properties for health in specialised shops; visit thematic spaces on the culture of the olive grove; enjoy events and traditions linked to this crop; visit white olive villages with cobbled streets or enjoy spas and hotels that offer specialised



Diputación de Jaén

Jaén allows the traveller to enjoy this unique olive-oil tourism offer which leaves no one indifferent and is complemented by the province's many other attractions

treatments with olive oil.

Jaén allows the traveller to enjoy this unique olive-oil tourism offer which leaves no one indifferent and is complemented by the province's many other attractions, which include an exceptional Renaissance heritage - with its greatest examples in the World Heritage cities of Úbeda and Baeza or in places such as Jaén city, Sabiote or Canena; as well as having the largest surface area of protected lands in Spain -

thanks to its four natural parks, including the Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas Park; or being home to the greatest concentration of watchtowers and fortresses on the European continent, as well as an Iberian legacy that is unique in the world.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

www.oleotourjaen.es und www.jaenparaisointerior.es.

LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Nice work if you can get it

"Tired of your job, do you want to earn a living from your hobby? Now you can! In a very short time you will be able to earn a lot of money by working at something you really like. Don't wait any longer to feel fulfilled! It's easy. You just have to sign up for my free master class. Fill out the form and I will send you the access code. You can also buy my book and start a new life today. Discover a whole world of possibilities! My name is Pepito and I'll teach you how to make a living out of thin air."

How many times have we seen similar messages on social media? Every day there are more and more digital gurus who are making a name for themselves on the internet. But what is the truth of their formula for happiness? Do these 'miracle jobs' exist?

Maybe we should ask ourselves what we are doing wrong for young people not to want to work in certain professions and a large majority to want to be Youtubers, influencers etc. What will become of Spanish society when the 'baby boom' generation retires and the generational change arrives... What experts will we have in a few years? Hit 'like' and subscribe for further thoughts. **HELENA C. ORIA**

Give us a wave

I wonder if anyone else has noticed that Spain seems to have had more official Covid waves than anyone else, including the UK? I was sure we were only up to five, but I saw 'sexta ola' (sixth wave) in a newspaper the other day. When did we gain one? Is there a

competition going on?

ALAN BURGESS

Airport thank you

I would like to express my thanks to the delightful team of Special Assistance staff at Malaga Airport for assisting my mother. They made a stressful arrival very pleasant. **ANNE GRIMES**

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THE MUSIC MAKER
PETER EDGERTON
www.e-peter.com

Year we go again

Crikey, that was quite a year. 2021 fizzed by at such a rate of knots that anyone who nodded off just after lunch on New Year's Day twelve months ago might well have missed it. Still, it's time to look forward to 2022 and all the joy and wonder it may bring. Here are a few predictions.

In the world of politics, Spanish prime minister Pedro Sánchez will go on holiday. In a wildly turbulent climate where what might happen next is anyone's guess, the only thing we can be sure of is that Mr Sánchez will be photographed on a beach somewhere with a book in his hand just as he was last year as all hell broke loose.

Where music is concerned, no one will sell any CDs at all anywhere and Spotify will become a medium-sized republic, with its sole aim being to

send homogenous playlist suggestions to every human being on earth until our brains turn to blancmange and we're unable to distinguish Billy Ocean from Billie Eilish or Elvis Costello from the proper Elvis. Children will use granddad's CDs as Frisbees.

In film, in between Spider-Man 346 and Batman The Ultimate Comeback, there'll be a new Wonder Woman movie. She'll be a man. Anyone coming up with any brand new or original ideas at film production studios will be put in the centre of the room to be roundly jeered at by their colleagues, all dressed in Superman t-shirts and Vans trainers.

Socially, we'll fragment even more, with middle-aged and old people continuing to form cliques and gangs on social media like teenage girls. By Decem-

ber, 'idiot' will be the most popular word of the year, having been used by everyone on the planet to describe anyone else who doesn't agree with them on every subject from the most complex issues of the day to which lipstick colour should be used by Kim Kardashian (if that's how you spell it).

In football, Barcelona and Manchester United will continue to implode until one of them proposes a new, breakaway Unsuper League where they battle it out with Sunday morning pub teams in the hope of ekeing out a nil-nil draw once in a while.

Meanwhile, my team, Liverpool, will continue to think they're better than they actually are which, to be fair, is a belief that seems to do our politicians no harm whatsoever.

A very happy and healthy new year to all.

IDÍGORAS



SUR in English

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THE BOTTOM LINE
JENNIE RHODES

Are flying visits a thing of the past?

Anyone would agree that there are few advantages of living through a global pandemic: curtailed freedoms; the worry over you or a loved one catching the dreaded virus; and the difficulty of knowing whether to make a journey, especially one abroad.

However, as a fairly seasoned traveller and certainly well-versed in the annual Christmas trip home to see the family in England, I can honestly say that travel-

ling in Covid times is, with the exception of copious form-filling and test-taking, actually quite enjoyable. At least my trip from Malaga to Stansted last week was.

At Malaga Airport there was no queue at security and departures was practically empty. My Ryanair flight was at most one third full, on time, and I was through passport control at both ends in no more than 10 minutes. As if things couldn't get better, I was one of three people on the air-

port shuttle bus at Stansted to take me to the car park where my parents have loyally come to pick me up over the years and one of those three people was the driver!

The roads felt quieter, although this was rush-hour in England, pre-Christmas, so I would be lying if I said they were hauntingly quiet. Compared even to Malaga's motorways during rush hour, the sheer amount of traffic on that small island never fails to astonish me when I'm at home.

Armed with my Covid vaccine certificate, the adventurous side of me is tempted to see where else I could travel to, just to enjoy the relative ease of people-free airports and planes. However, the precautionary voice inside my head is telling me not to be so stupid. There's a reason why nobody is travelling at the moment.

In fact it's telling me there are two: Co-

vid and the environmental crisis. If it's not one thing it's another. Are my years of carefree travelling well and truly behind me? Will the environmentally minded among us ever go back to those halcyon days of cheap flights and globe-trotting once the pandemic is over? Or will it be just a distant memory with the photos and souvenirs to prove we really did hop on and off planes with gay abandon in the past?

At the moment, I'm feeling quite glad that I made this particular journey, having missed Christmas with the family last year.

Many won't have because of the pandemic, which is entirely understandable. I admit I ummed and ahed about it and depending on expected pronouncements from Boris and Pedro (Sánchez), we're yet to see if it was an entirely sensible decision, but for now all's well that ends well...



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South Florida. A swampy wilderness. FORBES

Floating motionless in the dappled sunlight, with the distinctive black-grey scales of its spine arching above the surface of the water, was a Florida alligator. At around two and half metres long, it made for an impressive sight.

As I moved closer to take a photo, the beast started to move. Instinctively I felt cautious and stood completely still by the water's edge, while repeatedly reminding myself that these predatory reptiles, which have remained almost the same for the last eight million years, pose little threat to humans. Supposedly they are usually quite shy and instead take more interest in the abundant fish and birds of these vibrant wetlands – and the occasional pet dog that strays too far from its owner on a country walk.

I had left the sparkle of Miami and was heading west to Florida's Gulf Coast. Miami is without doubt one of my favourite US cities, an invigorating gateway to a winter-sun break. The metropolis is an unofficial capital of Latin America, a lively fusion of cultures, cuisine, and creativity, where seventy per cent of residents are Hispanic, many Cuban-Americans.

Miami gateway

After a few lively, sun-filled days, I left behind the sophistication of the city's beach resorts, and Miami's colourful neighbourhoods to drive across South Florida.

If you choose the multi-lane motorway, the Interstate 75,

Find some warm, winter sunshine in South Florida

Tranquillity. Take the road less travelled across the Everglades, leaving the vibrancy of Miami, to arrive at the sparkling white beaches of the Gulf Coast

ANDREW FORBES



nicknamed Alligator Alley, you can speed across this lower part of the sunshine state in a few hours. Yet I had decided to make a day of it, choosing the quieter highway 41, known as the Tamiami Trail. Built in the early 20th century, this two lane road allows curious visitors to pull over, stop for photos, take detours and explore the wild immensity that is the Everglades.

The Everglades

This national park, the wilder-

ness interior of South Florida, extends to some 20,000 square kilometres of swamps, wetlands, cypress forests and coastal mangroves. More than a third of the area is covered in water, and thanks to recent conservation efforts that are restoring the natural flow across the area, the Everglades are abundant with wildlife. Shoals of freshwater fish dart among delicate aquatic plants, while striking birds wade the shallows and intimidating-looking alligators lurk in silence.

In the winter, when water levels drop, it's much easier to explore the wetlands of South Florida and catch sight of these remarkable reptiles. Many tourists taking the Tamiami Trail stop off at Shark Valley Visitor Centre, about an hour west of Miami. Here you can park up and then rent bicycles or join small tour groups to see alligators basking in the sunshine.

Yet I wanted a more tranquil experience, surrounded by the nature of this extraordinary place.

Loop Road Scenic Drive

So, I exited the Highway 41 and joined the Loop Road Scenic Drive, an iconic route that runs through the remarkable scenery of the Big Cypress National Preserve, on the western edge of the Everglades. The first few kilometres of the road are tarmac, but soon enough the route narrows and becomes a dirt track, popular with hikers, cyclists and locals that like to try their luck at fishing.

Either side of the trail is dense with pine that later gives way to cypress forests that grow straight out of the shallow water. There

are regular points where culverts and small bridges allow water to flow beneath the road. Here the trees are thinned out, offering amazing views deep into the cypress forests, where you're assured to see wading birds, like brilliant white egrets, as well as herons, cormorants, and even a few silky black Anhinga, spreading out their wings in the warm sunlight.

In these dryer months, after the hurricane season, South Florida basks in Caribbean-like weather, leaving these country roads dry and easily accessible.

As its names implies, this scenic drive loops back onto the Highway 41. The Tamiami Trail is a slower way to cross the state. Admittedly you will come across roadworks, as Florida is correcting decades of damage caused to this delicate ecosystem by this old highway that 'cut' the Everglades in half.

Now portions of the 41 are being raised up, creating bridges and overpasses that allow the life-giving water to flow more freely once again across the entirety of the Everglades and the neighbouring national preserves.



An alligator.

The charm of this less popular route is that you feel much more connected with the landscape, which remains largely undeveloped. As you leave

Miami and enter the Everglades, you'll pass tourist stops offering Air Boat rides over the swamps to mangrove islands. Then after a few more kilometres, the wetlands change to spruce, pine, and cypress forests. Road signs warn of the occasional crossing area for the rare Florida Black Panther. You'll notice that your mobile phone signal slowly deteriorates to nothing – you have entered the swampy wilderness of South Florida.

Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk

Before reaching the Gulf Coast, there's another detour I recommend, just off the 41, called the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk. This elevated timber path meanders for a couple of kilometres through dense vegetation, offering a self-guided tour, with the help of information boards. It's an accessible and safe way

to get amongst the flora and fauna of the wetlands. One passes ancient trees almost strangled by thick, twisted vines, architectural royal palms that tower to more than 15 metres, and delicate cypress trees, with branches covered in Spanish moss, and silvery grey air plants. The occasional pop of winter colour comes from bromeliads and, later in spring, abundant orchids. Florida is among the fastest growing states in the US, yet here the booming cities and wealthy coastal resorts feel a world away.

However, after rejoining the highway, soon enough after less than an hour or so on the road, the Everglades soundtrack of egret squawks and squeals and the croaks of frogs was replaced with the sounds of traffic and modern civilisation.

Driving through the chic coastal city of Naples offers a glimpse of the luxury lifestyle on the shores of Florida's Gulf Coast, with kilometre after kilometre of upscale, gated communities where once wild landscapes have been dredged and

transformed into manicured havens for privileged retirees.

Gulf Coast

As the day drew to an end, and the intense colours of a gulf sunset ignited the sky, I arrived in a coastal community west of Fort Myers, overlooking Sanibel and on towards Captiva island.

Winter, from December to March, is the best time to visit this cluster of glorious barrier islands on the Gulf of Mexico, where dense, verdant mangroves surround tidal lagoons and border white sandy beaches.

I was last here almost twenty years ago, yet Sanibel island has retained its old Florida charm.

Pastel, 'candy-coloured' houses are set among coconut palms and no building towers above the trees. Sanibel is ideally orientated to catch shells, brought up by the gulf currents. So be prepared to get the Sanibel Stoop, as you bend to look down for fighting conch, lighting whelks and shiny olive shells on the shore.

It's legal to go shelling at

places like Bowman's beach, so long as you only take empty shells. Chatting to locals, I was recommended to get there early and walk the beaches as the tide rolls back in the morning, revealing the natural treasures of the gulf.

Island life

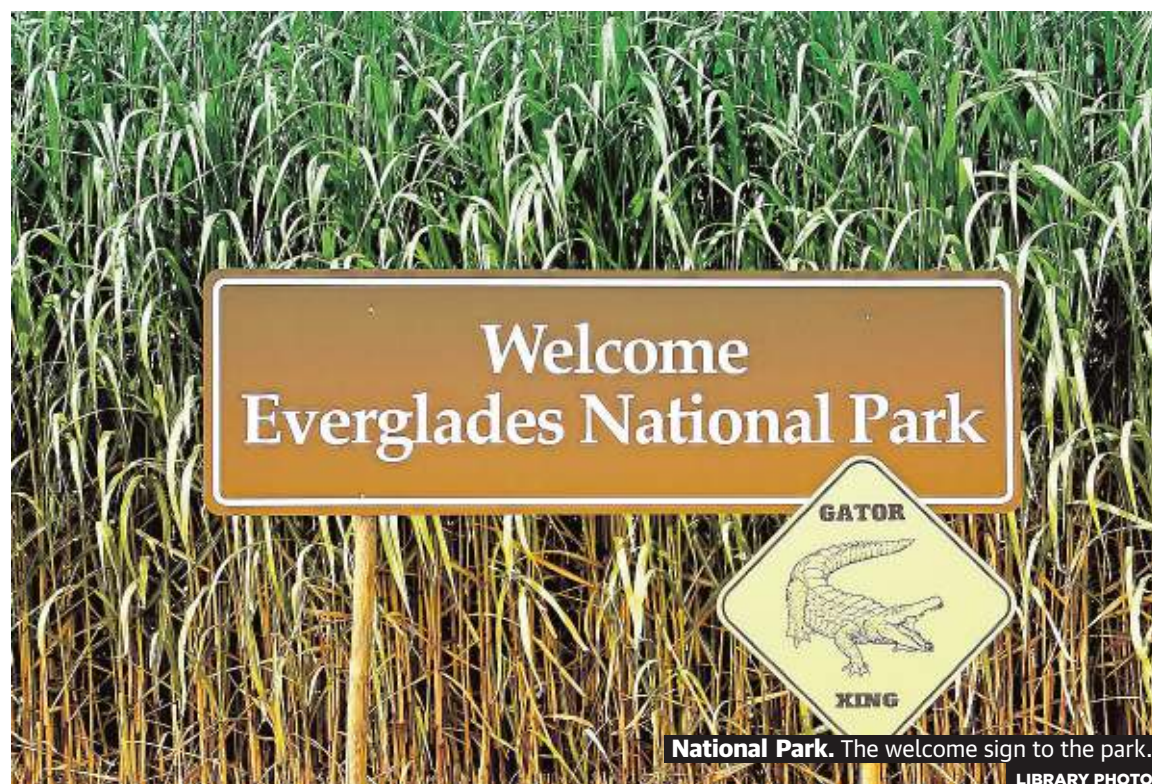
Sanibel and neighbouring Captiva are easily reached by road

from Fort Myers.

From these islands one can board the boat services and private water taxis to the more isolated islands of southwest Florida. So, one can have lunch at Cabbage Key Inn or live the high life for a day on the exclusive island of Gasparilla, home to the posh Gasparilla Inn and Club, and the postcard perfect 19th century Port Boca Grande Lighthouse.

From the cosmopolitan gateway of Miami, a day tailing alligators in the Everglades, to the sub-tropical warmth and white sand beaches of a hundred Gulf Coast islands, this is an unforgettable itinerary for a winter sun holiday.

i South Florida insider guide:
See overleaf



If you can't have your cake and eat it, get more cake.



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THE INSIDER GUIDE

South Florida



Sanibel Island. FORBES

ANDREW FORBES

WHERE TO STAY:

The Setai, Miami Beach - Miami

The Setai, Miami Beach is a fusion of intimate, boutique personalised hospitality with the flair and style of one of South Florida's best resorts. A member of Leading Hotels of the World, the property has exquisite guest rooms in an original art deco building as well as ocean suites in a new tower. Upscale facilities include the Valmont

Spa and a Clefs d'Or Chief Concierge. The gardens, punctuated with water features, sculptures and tropical plants, are where guests will find three temperature-controlled pools, and beyond, the private full-service beach. The Setai's Chief Concierge Maite Foriasky and his team are on hand to give guests insightful tips on enjoying the city's diverse culinary scene, as well as securing access to the arts of Miami Beach, including The Bass contemporary art museum, and the New World Center - a Frank Gehry designed venue for mu-

sic, including classical performances by the renowned New World Symphony.

www.thesetaihoteles.com/en-us/hotels/miami-beach

Gasparilla Inn & Club - Gulf Coast

A classic old Florida resort dating from the 1930s, this Historic Hotel of America Landmark Inn is the place to stay on the exclusive island of Gasparilla.

www.the-gasparilla-inn.com

Useppa Island Club - Gulf Coast

This private, car-free island offers charming homes for rent in old-style southern architecture set amongst palms overlooking the water. A small inn also offers accommodation and lunch for day trippers looking for an idyllic island experience.

www.useppa.com

Island Inn Sanibel - Gulf Coast

This renowned beachfront resort hotel with beach cottages also has a restaurant called Traditions on the Beach. Good base for an island holiday of kayaking, shelling, and sunbathing.

www.islandinnsanibel.com

WHERE TO EAT:

Quinto la Huella - Miami

Uruguayan style Quinta de Huella is a homage to the famous seaside South American Parador La Huella restaurant. It reflects the original's coastal location with a chic chiringuito aesthetic. Dining is available inside, or outside on a beautiful terrace where among the vine-covered pergola one can catch glimpses of the sparkling skyscrapers of Miami's Brickell City Center.

Expect excellent seafood and meat from the huge wood burning grill, as well as a special sushi concept, RAW by Quinto.

For after-dinner cocktails and a pulsating Latino vibe, head up to Sugar, the lush rooftop bar and lounge on the 40th floor of EAST Miami hotel.

www.easthotels.com/en/miami/restaurants-and-bars/quinto-la-huella

Secret Food Tour - Miami

Discover the flavours of Miami, a city with a rich culinary scene thanks to immigrants from South America, Cuba, and the Caribbean. The tour promises tropical flavours and a traditional Cuban sandwich in an authentic Cuban restaurant - and of course the best key lime pie in town.

www.secretfoodtours.com/miami

Jaya at The Setai Miami Beach

Jaya, inspired by historical silk and ancient spice trading routes, is where Executive Chef Vijayudu Veena and his team highlight the

diversity of regional specialties from Southeast and Northern Asia, with a soundtrack of live DJs and live entertainment by spectacular performance artists.

www.thesetaihoteles.com

Joanie's Blue Crab Café . The Everglades

After a day exploring the Everglades, stop off at this landmark restaurant for soft-shell blue crab sandwiches, fried grouper and catfish as well as the promise of 'the best Gator in town!'

www.facebook.com/joaniesbluecrabcafe

Matanzas on the Bay - Fort Myers Beach

Waterfront restaurant on Fort Myers Beach, known for seafood specialties like coconut shrimp and lobster.

www.matanzasonthebay.com

Cielo - Sanibel Island, Gulf Coast

Indulge in crafted cocktails and creative dishes at this upscale



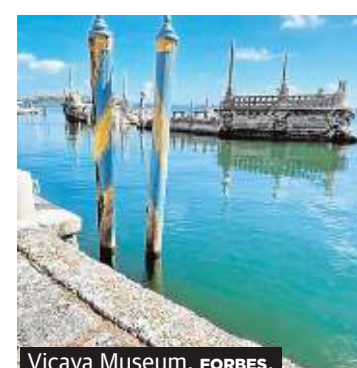
Gasparilla Island. FORBES



The Setai. FORBES



East Miami Sugar.



Vizcaya Museum. FORBES.

farm-to-table restaurant on Sanibel island. Chef Melissa Atkin and her team prepare dishes like seared scallops, octopus carpaccio and tasty wagyu meatballs, whilst Mixologist Rachel Urbelis will make sure your evening starts in style at the bar

www.cielo-sanibel.com

WHAT TO DO

Vizcaya Museum & Gardens - Miami

Evocative of a Venetian palace, this spectacular, historic estate on Miami's Biscayne Bay, is a mere 10 minute cab ride from the city's downtown area. Businessperson and conservationist James Deering created this fantasy winter home in the early 1900s, as Miami's sub-tropical climate suited his health.

www.vizcaya.org

Big Cypress National Preserve

Hike, cycle or drive through the freshwater wetland landscape of the Big Cypress Swamp, west of the Everglades. Visit the Big Cypress Bend Boardwalk.

www.nps.gov/bicy

Everglades National Park

The largest subtropical wilderness in the United States, the Everglades is a World Heritage Site, International Biosphere Reserve.

www.nps.gov/ever

Edison & Ford Winter Estates - Fort Myers

The historic downtown area of the city of palms is filled with surprises, from a vintage theatre to standout dining. There are also the impressive, former winter estates of world-renowned investor Thomas Edison and automobile magnate Henry Ford, dating to 1885. These two extraordinary men were friends and with their families created neighbouring winter homes which are now a fascinating legacy, open to the public.

www.edisonfordwinterestates.org

Canoe and Kayak - Gulf Coast

Hundreds of kilometres of paddling trails through the bays, rivers, backwaters, and shorelines of Southwest Florida. See first-hand dolphins and manatees amongst the mangroves.

www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/calusablueway

TRAVEL

Flights

Travel requirements are subject to change, but at time of writing only a negative antigen test result is required. US Immigration and customs upon arrival have been simplified and fast-tracked. Just complete the ESTA visa waiver and Attestation form before departure.

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Nostalgia in three clicks



“Pure” or “straight” photography is the ancestor of the frontal hard-edged photographic codes that have come to be associated with conceptual art. Popularised by his mentor, Alfred Stieglitz, it marked a deliberate departure from the hazy Impressionistic “Pictorialism” previously in vogue. Suddenly, beauty was in the hands of the camera-holder. The idea was to reinvent it, pushing the limits of reality. Hence the title of the exhibition

A further treat awaits photo buffs visiting Malaga during the festive season. The Picasso Museum has conjured up a spectacular overview highlighting multiple facets of the talent of Picasso's friend and biographer, the French-Hungarian photographer, filmmaker and artist,

Another “Strand-Brassai connection” is their mutual fascination with the eyes of their subjects. For Brassai’s take on Pablo Picasso’s “black diamonds”, turn to the “museopicassomálaga” website’s audio guide: Why do



“JMP” has always claimed to steer clear of classic reality - and, to be sure - whether photographing Mick Jagger, or the international Haute Couture gang, past and present - he has never erred from that objective... I'll say no more, just... Go, go, go... Go see it...!



Paul Strand's *Young Boy*, at the Thyssen. **EFE**

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DENISE BUSH

GARDENING

Eucryphia lucida

This attractive shrub or tree is native to Tasmania but it is famous around the world for the highly aromatic honey that is produced by the bees that feed on the nectar in the flowers. Commonly called leatherwood, Eucryphia lucida grows in the understorey of forests where it receives partial shade

and shelter from winds. It can reach over ten metres tall but is usually kept to about two metres for ornamental use. It is one of eight species in the Eucryphia genus, five of which are located in Australia and has small, glossy, green leaves and grey-brown bark. There are variegated

cultivars including ‘spring glow’ which has cream edged leaves and white flowers. The strongly fragrant, four petalled white flowers appear in late spring and summer and resemble those of a briar rose. The petals are sometimes flushed with pink or can be a creamy yellow colour. The cultivar E. lucida ‘Ballerina’ has larger flowers, pink with a red border and red stamens.

Parts of the flower are covered with a sticky sap. They provide a plentiful supply of rich nectar and will attract many pollinating insects, especially bees, which makes the plant so loved by apiculturists. After flowering, leathery seed pods develop which open in boat shaped sections when ripe and release multiple copper-coloured, winged seeds. Leatherwood is easy to propagate by seed although cultivars will need to be grown from cuttings to remain true to the parent plant. Cuttings should be taken from semi-ripe wood and using a rooting hormone gel or powder will increase success rates. Although leatherwood can withstand short periods of frost, it is not drought resistant and will need regular watering during the hottest months. It can be kept compact by pruning and is suitable to grow as a container plant. Clipping it back immediately after flowering will ensure a good flush of flowers the following year.



E. lucida and E. lucida Ballerina (inset). FLICKR/WIKIMEDIA

READERS' PHOTOS



DELIA TURNER

Swan neck agave

The Agave attenuata is commonly called the swan neck agave because the flower spike develops an elegant curve. The parent plant dies after flowering although usually there are lots of ‘pups’ around the base to propagate. Photo supplied by Delia Turner.



BRIAN GOLDING

Sweet Alyssum

Although this low-growing, mat-forming plant can be invasive, it can be readily forgiven at this time of year as it continues flowering, is sweetly fragrant and provides some food for late nectar feeders. The photo was sent in by Brian Golding.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies and some like to take photos of plants they see when out and about. Why not share them with others? Email

your photos to english@diariosures or send them to SUR in English, Avda Dr Marañón 48, 29009 Málaga, with a caption and a few words of explanation. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook (surenglish) or Twitter (@SUR_English).



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WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

31 DECEMBER 2001

Spanish peseta leaves circulation and euros move in

The currency was replaced by the euro at the end of 2001 after 133 consecutive years of use in Spain

SHAY CONAGHAN

The last day of 2001 marked both the end of an era and the beginning of a new chapter in Spanish and European history. After 133 consecutive years of use, the Spanish peseta had begun the process of being phased out, before being replaced entirely by the newly created euro. From 2002 shoppers could

start to use euros in cash transactions, although the two currencies coexisted in our purses for a couple of months until March 2002 in what was deemed a ‘transitional period’. The peseta was first introduced in Spain in October 1868, as a way for the government to start afresh and distance itself from the monarchy, which had just been overthrown after the Glorious Revolution. Since then, the peseta has undergone many transformations, going from higher to lower values, as well as different shapes and sizes. At first, only coins were used, aimed for day-to-day usage. One, two, five and ten cent coins were made of bronze; 20



People wait to exchange their pesetas in June this year. EFE

and 50 cents were silver alongside the one, two and five peseta coins; while the 100 pesetas coins were made of gold. Precious metals were used until the Second Spanish Republic, when, due to the dire economic status the country faced, brass was used instead; then aluminium was used during the years of the Franco dictatorship.



Peseta monument in Fuengirola. SUR

Notes were also used throughout the currency’s tenure, starting in July 1874 with 25, 50, 500 and 1,000 peseta notes, mainly aimed to be used by banks and other financial entities. By 1992, the Maastricht Treaty had introduced the idea of a unified, European currency and countries’ adop-

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Moneda	Currency/Coin
Reemplazar	To replace
Derrocar	To overthrow
Transacción	Transaction
Valores	Values
Diario	Daily
Bronce	Bronze
Plata	Silver
Curso legal	Legal tender
Vender	To sell
Metales	Metals
Nefasto	Dire
Latón	Brass
Billetes	Banknotes
Principalmente	Mainly
Comprar	To buy
Intercambiar	To exchange
Dinero	Money
Efectivo	Cash

tion of it on entry to the European Union. The peseta’s tenure ended in January 1999 for non-cash transactions, when the value of the euro was fixed at 166.386 pesetas. People who still had old peseta coins and notes had the option to trade them in for euros until 30 June 2021.

Bilingual crossword inside back page

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EXHIBITIONS

Fernando Calvillo

LA CALA DE MIJAS. Until 7 January. Centro Cultural de La Cala.

Metamorfosis, an exhibit of a selection of work by self-taught painter, Fernando Calvillo. The paintings are presented in different formats, such as treated paper, metal sheets and acrylic, and different styles such as abstraction and realism.

Juan Manuel Parra Párramo

MIJAS. Until 7 January. Casa Museo

The exhibition consists of pencil drawings as well as paintings, in a variety of styles.

Brigitte Bardot

TORREMOLINOS. Until 7 January,

2022. First floor of the Town Hall. The exhibition entitled, Mito y Clichés en Málaga, includes a series of photographs that record Brigitte Bardot's first visit to Torremolinos during filming in 1957.

Málaga Picasso Museum

MÁLAGA. Museo Picasso Málaga, Calle San Agustín.

The Walls of Málaga. Until January. 900 residents of Málaga, from all different walks of life, cultures and ages, have taken part in this exhibition by taking photos of parts of Málaga. These photos have been mounted on a map of the city and are displayed as a mural. www.museopicassomalaga.org.



The Walls of Málaga, MPM

Photography exhibition

MÁLAGA. Until 9 January, Sala Mingorance, Archivo Municipal.

An exhibition by El Colectivo de Fotógrafos Artistas Malagueños (FAMA). Around 24 artists are exhibiting 40 photographs in different formats. MUPAM which is open 10am - 6pm. Free entry.

Metal Dennis Manarchy

MÁLAGA. Until 15 January. La Térmica.

An exhibition of photographs by American artist Dennis Manarchy. The models in the photos have been made-up using metallic spray paint and dressed with fantastic objects from 'Radio Guy' Steve Erenberg's collection. The items include industrial artifacts and rare medical instruments.

Carmen Thyssen Museum

MÁLAGA. C/ Compañía, 10. 10am - 8pm Tuesday to Sunday.

Sorolla in Javea. Until 16 January 2022. Sorolla's summer vacation in Javea in 1905 was the catalyst for a series of paintings which demonstrate his recognised style coming to

The colourful imagination of Patricio Cabrera in large format paintings

The Seville artist premieres *El Labrador y el Astronauta*, with more than twenty unpublished paintings created for the exhibition

CRISTINA PINTO

MÁLAGA. The large CAC Málaga exhibition hall is now filled with the works of Patricio Cabrera. Just by walking into the room, the vibrant colours of the Vista del Mar en Tiscamanita facing you, makes a huge impact. The senses are activated when contemplating this large format canvas where geometry, perspective, bright colours and dimensions are played around with. On both sides of the room, this play on movement and fantasy continues in the new exhibition of the CAC, *El Labrador y el Astronauta*, considered the most important exhibition by Patricio Cabrera.

The sixty works on display offer a walk through an exotic

world full of fantasies and illusion, with canvases of different techniques and formats. Some of them - about 20 paintings - were created especially for the exhibition by the Seville artist.

"I wanted to bring new works to Málaga and that's what gave me the impulse. We could have made an exhibition with some of the works I already have, but my dream was to exhibit paintings that I had never shown before," said Patricio Cabrera.

Imagination is what the artist has in spades and that is where the explosion of colours of his creations comes from. Blue, pink, green, yellow, red and orange come into these works of Cabrera, which introduce the viewer standing before them into a new world.

After visiting the exhibition, the Málaga councillor for Culture for Málaga, Noelia Losada, reflected on the tonalities of the works and the large size:

"These colours and this



Patricio Cabrera with one of his colourful paintings. MARCOS ÁLVAREZ

large format lifts our spirits. I like it a lot and it's not just because the experts say so," said the councillor.

During the tour of the exhibition at the CAC - which will be available until 28 February - you can see the different layers of Cabrera through his own language.

The curator of the exhibi-

tion, Fernando Francés, pointed out that Patricio Cabrera went to New York and sampled postmodernism.

"Those experiences of Patricio's come to the surface in his current work. There are constructive, architectural elements.... There is always an element of illusion, of imagining a better world," he said.

maturity with rocky coves and bright light reflecting off the sea with figures in the water. Around 20 canvases from that period have been lent by the Sorolla Museum in Madrid.

Poster collection

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. Until 9 January. Casa Fuerte Bexmilitana.

Twenty posters advertising films by Luis García Berlanga, one hundred years after his birth.

Playmobil

ALMUÑÉCAR. Until 9 January. Casa de la Cultura.

From one of the biggest private collections in Spain, four dioramas and a nativity scene created with Playmobil figures.

MUSIC AND DANCE

La Cochera Cabaret

MÁLAGA. Avda de los Guindos.

3 January, 9pm. The Free Soul Band. info@lacocheraentradas.com

Clarence Jazz Club

TORREMOLINOS. Calle Danza Invisible, 8.

6 January, 10pm. Jazz jam session.

7 January, 10pm. Philip Adie Trio.

8 January, 10pm. Antonio Lizana. info@clarencejazzclub.com

Ventana Abierta Jazz Club

NERJA. Hotel Plaza Cavana, C/Gra-nada.

4 February, 8pm. The Daniel Amat Trio plays Latin Jazz. [abierta.es](http://www.ventana-</p>
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The Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra

MÁLAGA. Various venues.

3 January, 8pm. Teatro Cervantes.

New Year's Concert.

More information: www.orquestafilarmonicademálaga.com Twitter:

@filarmonimalaga or Facebook:

www.facebook.com/Filarmonica-Málaga.

La Posada

MÁLAGA. Vincci Posada del Patio, Pasillo de Sta Isabel.

7 January, 8pm. Daphne & Nicky.

www.tallerblues.es

The Rob Sas Band

COSTA DEL SOL. Various venues.

1, 8 January, 10pm, Benavista. The

Rob Sas band will be playing in the Melòdia bar and restaurant.

Cello concert



Photos, Sala Mingorance, Málaga

MÁLAGA. 4 January, 6pm. Museum Jorge Rando, C/Cruz del Molinillo.

Cello soloist Adriana Rojo Ruiz will be playing Bachs Suites 1, 2 and 3 for cello. Free.

Unicaja concerts

MÁLAGA. 8 January, 12pm. Sala Unicaja María Cristina.

The students of La Cajita Musical de Málaga are performing A Las Puertas de Palacio, a concert themed around proncesses and villains for all the family. Tickets 8€: www.ticketentradas.com

Little Pepe reggae

MÁLAGA. 5 January, 9pm. Sala Trinchera, C/Parauta.

The concert, Noche de Reggae Magos, presents the latest releases from Little Pepe aka Oscar Sánchez backed by Niggaswing and with the collaboration of Zatu, Green Valley, Fyahbwoy, Kaze, Kafu Banton and Pinnacle Rockers. Little Pepe will be on stage with Camilo la Greca and Gabylon Selectah. Tickets: wegow.com

New Year Concerts

LA HERRADURA. 2 January, 8pm. Centro Cívico.

The Banda Municipal Almuñécar will play a special New Year's concert.

ESTEPONA. 4 January, 8pm. Auditorio Felipe VI.

The Málaga Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by José María Moreno.

Tickets 10€: www.tafestepona.com

GIBRALTAR. John Mackintosh Hall.

The Gibraltar Philharmonic Orchestra



Little Pepe, La Trinchera, Málaga.

are postponing the concert in view of the evolution of the pandemic.

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Paseo Marítimo.

5 January, 11am. Concert by Municipal band.

THEATRE AND OPERA

Dumbo the musical

MÁLAGA. 5 January, 12pm, 6 January 5pm. Teatro Cervantes.

A theatrical reproduction of Dumbo for children. (In Spanish). Tickets: <http://www.unientradas.es>

NATIVITY SCENES

Málaga City Nativity Scenes

BAILÉN MIRAFLORES. Until 5 January. Salón de Actos, Centro Social.

A classical nativity with biblical scenes covering around 25 square metres and with over 800 figures. The montage includes olive groves, houses, castles, rivers and fields as well as the birth of the baby Jesus.



Dumbo, Teatro Cervantes, Malaga

MALAGA TOWN HALL. Until 6 January.
The Nativity Scene is set up in the patio of the town hall and can be seen 10am-2pm and 5pm-9pm weekdays.

Thyssen Museum Neapolitan Nativity
MALAGA. Until January. Patio de las Columnas, Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga.
Archicofradía de los Dolores de San Juan have installed the traditional 'Belén napolitano' which is free to visit during the opening hours of the museum.

Christmas Nativity Scenes RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. Until January. La Sala Mare Nostrum de La Cala del Moral.
The municipal nativity scene made by Agustín Gómez Fuentes.
VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Until 7 January.
Visit the nativity scenes in the Palacio del Marqués de Beniel, the Museo de Vélez-Málaga and the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Francisco Hernández.

MORE IDEAS

New Year's Eve Countdown from home

GIBRALTAR. 31 December. On TV or Facebook.
The New Year's Eve countdown will be presented by James Neish. The variety show style evening will include performances by Andrea Simpson and the GAMPAs cast of Legally Blonde the Musical and Back to the 90's. There will also be music from local band Eclipse and The Adrian Pisarello Band Universe plus more. This programme can be viewed live on Friday 31 December on GBC TV and the GCS Facebook page from 11:15pm

Mercado Navideño ESTEPONA. Until 6 January. 6-11pm Mon-Thurs, 12pm-midnight weekends and bank holidays. Gardens of the Parque Botánico-Orquideario. Crafts, books and typical food items.

Las Luces del Botánico, Christmas Garden MALAGA. Until 9 January 2022, 6.30 - 9.30pm. Gates close at 11pm. Malaga Jardín Botánico La Concepción.
A two kilometre route around the gardens will be lit by over two million lights and accompanied by music. Some of the lights will be in the form of some of the fauna present in the garden such as owls and squirrels and some flora such as a huge 'biznaga' lighting up one of the lakes. There will also be illuminated silhouettes of king Alfonso XIII, Sissi Emperatriz and Queen Isabella II.

Lux Mundi TORRE DEL MAR. Mon and Wed 10am-1pm, Fridays, 11am - 1pm. Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre, Avda Moscatel.
New Year celebration. 31 December, 12pm. Toasting to the New Year and grapes.

Fitness walk MALAGA. 8 January, 3pm. Check-in at Torre Mónica, C/Pacífico.
The walk will proceed along the Paseo Marítimo a distance of 5km approximately, returning to the starting point at around 4.40pm. Pets, pushchairs or children under ten are not allowed. Pre-registration required 11€. Tee-shirts 5€. <https://fitnesswalk.eu/> or email: info@fitnesswalk.eu

O. V. FILMS

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last-minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor MALAGA. Centro de Ocio, Plaza Mayor, Avda Alfonso Ponce León. Tel: 902902103. www.yelmocines.es.
Matrix Resurrections: 13.30 (Sun); 17.15 (Fri, Sun-Thurs); 21.45 (Sat).
Canta 2: 14.55 (Sun).
Spiderman No Way Home: 13.15 (Sun); 16.30 (Fri, Sun-Thurs); 17.30, 20.30 (Sat); 19.30 (Sun-Tues); 22.30 (Sun-Thurs).
The Card Counter: 13.20 (Sun).
The King's Man: 12.55 (Sun); 15.50 (Fri, Sun-Thurs).

Salón Varietés kicks off new year with family pantomime fun

The theatre's production of Jack and the Beanstalk will offer matinee and evening performances

TONY BRYANT

FUENGIROLA. The Salón Varietés Theatre in Fuengirola will start the new year by presenting its annual pantomime, which, this year, is the time-worn classic, Jack and the Beanstalk.

Directed by Paul Kloegman - a British expat who has directed several productions at the theatre since arriving on the coast in 2009 - the show adheres to the popular fairy-tale about a poor country boy who trades the family cow for a handful of magic beans, which grow into an enormous beanstalk reaching up into the clouds.

The production will include all of the story's favourites, like the unfriendly giant, the goose that laid the golden egg and the magical harp that plays itself.



Early 20th century illustration of the unfriendly giant. SUR

The fun-filled family production was postponed in December, but the theatre has now added more dates to compensate for the cancelled shows.

The production begins on Sunday 2 January at 7pm, with nightly performances at 7.30pm on 3rd, 4th, 6th and 7th, while matinee performances will take place at 3pm on 3rd, 5th and 6th January.

Tickets are available from

www.salonvarietes.com Any tickets purchased for the December performances can be exchanged for new dates by calling the box office on 952474542 between 11am and 2.30pm from Monday to Friday.

Health and safety measures will be enforced, including the wearing of face masks in the auditorium. The theatre does not admit children under the age of two.

Westside Story: 12.50 (Sun); 16.20 (Fri, Sun-Tues); 22.35 (Wed, Thurs).

Yelmo Cines, Rincón RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. C/ Arroyo Totalán. Tel: 902220922. www.yelmocines.es
The King's Man: 21.45 (Tues)
Matrix Resurrections: 19.44 (Tues).
Spider Man No Way Home: 21.00 (Tues).
Westside Story: 19.20 (Tues).

Yelmo Cines, Vialia MALAGA. Centro Comercial Vialia. Tel: 902220922
The Card Counter: 20.30 (Tues).
Matrix Resurrections: 12.40 (Sun); 20.40 (Sat); 20.50 (Sun-Tues); 21.40 (Wed, Thurs).
Spider man No Way Home: 12.45 (Sun); 22.10 (every day except Fri).
The King's Man: 20.10 (Tues)
Westside Story: 12.40 (Sun); 22.20

(Sun-Tues).

Cinesur Miramar FUENGIROLA. Avda de la Encarnación. Tel: 952198600. Until 4 January.
Spiderman: 12.15, 16.00, 19.00, 22.00.
Westside Story: 12.00, 18.00
Canta 2: 12.20, 16.00.
Matrix Resurrections: 21.15.
The Card Counter: 15.45.
The King's Man: 20.00, 22.45.

Cinesur Ingenio VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Avda Juan Carlos, 1. Tel: 667773187.
Canta2: 11.50 (Fri, Sun, Tues).
Spiderman, No Way Home: 21.45 (Mon, Tues).
The Card Counter: 18.10 (Tues).
Grease: 20.00 (Tues).
Matrix Resurrections: 16.30 (Tues).
Westside Story: 19.00 (Tues).

Cine Albéniz MALAGA. C/ Alcazaba, 4. Tel: 902360295. www.cinealbeniz.com. Until 4 Jan (closed 31 Dec).
Pearl: 22.10.
Silent Night: 17.30.



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A Happy New Year from Yorkshire Linens

The continued support of the local community has been invaluable to keep the doors open

YORKSHIRE LINEN

The start of 2022 is looking like being a bumpy ride again and many local business owners face the possibility of tighter restrictions during the winter period. It can be hard to try and plan anything in advance.

It is often over-looked that behind a shop frontage or in the kitchen of your local bar is someone fighting to stay open through what has been the most unprecedented of times and the continued support of the local community is invaluable to keep the doors open.

We don't have a crystal ball and never know how busy we may be; as the rules change regarding flights and Covid passports have a knock-on effect. The strict laws over workers and contracts here in Spain makes employing extra staff costly and complicated and many small businesses just don't want to risk the extra outlay on wages until things really do become more normal.

If your meal takes a while longer at a restaurant, or your favourite boutique looks a little bit disorganised; there is probably a good reason why. From my own experience last year, there were a few months over the summer when we literally could not get the shelves filled fast enough, as folks needed to furnish holiday rental apartments due to flights operating once again. It was a challenging time for us, as we could have used extra staff, but to employ more was too risky.

It has been increasingly difficult to obtain products both from the UK and the EU. We have all noticed gaps on the shelves of supermarkets and many retailers holding less designs and less stock. We literally ran out of duvets in December, our Spanish manufacturers struggled with obtaining raw commodities such as cotton and polyester and the supply chain fell apart for a few weeks.

However, we would like to thank our loyal shoppers who have been with us throughout this challenging year. We received some amazing reviews which makes all those challenges so worth it. So as we head towards a new year and new challenges, we at Yorkshire Linen, Beds and More will continue to serve you in a new, familiar way!

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Can you really reduce the bags under your eyes?

A few simple habits can help to keep them under control

SOLANGE VÁZQUEZ



Many a song talks about our eyes and how people see them. One Cuban song, for example, compares eyes opening to dawn breaking and eyes closing to nightfall. So is the way others see our eyes really that important?

Well, according to poetry it is and, at the other extreme, artificial intelligence, which is now applied to almost everything, tells us that it is, too: its algorithms reveal that the eyes, their proportions and relation to the rest of the face, are key to determining how attractive someone is. That's why any small defect that affects the appearance of the eyes is seen as a bad thing.

"And now, with masks, as we only see people's eyes, even more so. Also, during the months people have been working from home they have seen themselves in the foreground on the screen, and that is never very flattering. It has made them focus on things we don't like about their eyes. So right now demand for cosmetic eye treatments and operations is booming," said José Manuel Béjar, who is a plastic surgeon at the San Juan de Dios hospital.

We are all horrified when we see the dark circles that tiredness



ILLUSTRATION CARMEN CASADO

causes under our eyes, but what can we do about it?

"It's not the same thing to have bags under your eyes because you're going through a period of stress or not sleeping as it is through genetic causes or simply age. The former are easier to treat, but the others are complicated,"

said Dr María Agustina Segurado, a cosmetics advisor to brands such as Nivea.

However, there are some things that can be done (and, especially, not done) to keep them under control. Avoid unprotected exposure to the sun and treat eye infections and atopic dermatitis quickly: this

will help to minimise aesthetic problems around the eyes, an area comprising 22 muscles in constant movement (blinking, gestures, focusing the vision) which is easily distended. It is very delicate and is protected by a very thin layer of skin, low in sebaceous glands, collagen and elastin. There-

fore it needs to be treated with great care. Habits that exacerbate the problem, such as some of those detailed here, should be avoided.

1. Sleeping badly

Good news: in most people, bags under the eyes are related to a lack of sleep or excessive tiredness and

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SOS, quick solutions

The fastest way
Wipe an ice cube over your face, especially the area under the eyes.

'Flash' capsules or patches
These will help because they fill and smooth the area. "Only for a few hours, though," said Dr Béjar.

Raid the fridge
Keep cucumber, green tea bags or cool teaspoons in the fridge and apply them over the eyes for 15 to 20 minutes. Cold is great for reducing dark circles, because it activates the circulation and reduces swelling. You can keep the cream for around your eyes in the fridge, too.

Massage to decongest
It only takes a minute. When you get up, apply cream around the eyes and press gently from the end of the eyebrow to the tear duct. Then, in the opposite direction. Activate circulation by drumming the area with your fingers, stretch your fingers over the eyebrows. Below, just a few gentle taps will be enough.

Demand for surgery

Remedies for bags under the eyes can be helpful, including cosmetic ones, but the genetic factor and age are so determinant that sometimes the only solution is plastic surgery, a blepharoplasty. "I have operated on

people in their thirties and forties, but most of them are in their fifties and sixties," said Dr Béjar. And it isn't a definitive solution to the problem. "They say it makes you look ten years younger, but it doesn't last forever. After a few years, you will be back where you started,

so all you are doing is gaining time," he said. And can people have another operation after that? "The post-operative phase isn't particularly uncomfortable, it doesn't hurt, but people tend to only have the operation once, unless they are celebrities, of course," he said.

Glittery eye shadow makes a comeback for New Year's Eve

they improve considerably when that cause is removed. When you find yourself in this situation, the blood vessels dilate and swell. Who hasn't had a short or bad night at some time and woken up looking like Nosferatu the vampire? Or it could also be because you are sleeping in an unsuitable position, putting pressure on the face and stopping the blood reaching it correctly. Beauty experts advise sleeping between seven and nine hours a night and, if possible, face upwards. It also helps to have the head slightly raised.

2. Cigarettes and booze

Oh, those intense nights out that leave you with a pair of cosmic dark circles under the eyes to remember them by! Alcohol and tobacco contribute to dehydration of the skin and the loss of collagen, making the vascular network more visible. They also reduce the amount of oxygen in the blood, so dark circles beneath the eyes are more visible and can be seen through the skin.

3. Question of vitamins

If you have inexplicably noticeable

bags under the eyes, you should check your diet because the area around the eyes can be very revealing of certain deficiencies. The lack of vitamin C, iron or zinc can result in pronounced dark circles beneath them. "It's also necessary to have a good level of vitamin K, which is an essential nutrient for blood coagulation and is found naturally in green vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, spinach and broccoli," said Dr Segurado.

4. Good hydration, but not before sleeping

For the blood to circulate correctly and the body to function properly, it is important to stay hydrated. If there is a problem with circulation, this will be reflected by the blood vessels, in other words, by the formation of bags under the eyes, which are nothing more than hyperpigmentation (they can be covered up by makeup). That's why good hydration is important: don't wait until you are thirsty to drink water, and drink at least two litres of water or infusions a day. However, don't drink a lot before going to bed, because it accumulates and you will wake up with bigger bags under the eyes than ever.

Bright, metallic eyelids are a great way to make an impact at a party but your eyes need to be sparkling too

DENISE BUSH

MALAGA. Are you celebrating New Year's Eve this year with a party? If you are, add a bit of glamour with glittering eye makeup.

Sparkling or shimmering eyelids are not a new fashion trend. Elizabeth Taylor was probably the first when she applied glittery, blue eye shadow for her role as Cleopatra in the 60s. It was then emulated by fashion models such as Twiggy.

The metallic look persisted in the 70s with the singer Cher and in the 80s when lids were coloured with rainbow shades from copper to metallic purple and green.

In the 90s it started to be less popular, except for party wear, and has been lurking in the background ever since. However, this New Year, glittering eye lids are set to make a come-



Add sparkle to your look with glitter and metallic eyeshadow. **SPECSAVERS**

back. Yet, to make the best impact, you need to take care of your eyes so that they have a bit of sparkle too.

According to Giles Edmonds, Specsavers clinical services director, heavy drinking and lack of sleep plays havoc with our eyes. "When you lose more fluid than you take in, your body becomes dehydrated. Our eyes can become dry and irritated. The best way to combat this is

by drinking plenty of water. Your optician can also recommend eye drops that can help." He also says it is important to remove all makeup and false eyelashes before sleeping.

So, if you want to make a statement at your party but don't want to damage your eyes, make sure you drink lots of water and gently remove any trace of makeup before you crash into bed.

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Brothers Francisco and Antonio, from the second generation, with families and workers in the 60s. **sur**



Antonio Ramírez, from the fourth generation, in the bakery. **E. C.**

A hundred years baking bread in Nerja

NERJA
The Ramírez bakery turns 100, with the fourth generation at the helm of a business that seeks to reinvent itself while preserving its traditions

EUGENIO CABEZAS
The Ramírez bakery is an institution in Nerja. Founded in 1921, it is still located in the same spot where they first began to bake the bread that the neighbours brought to their ovens. The founders were Francisco Ramírez and Eloisa Navas, who had one of the few flour mills that there were in those days in the easternmost coastal town of the province.

A century later, two of their great-grandchildren, Antonio and María José Ramírez are in charge of the business. Although they still try to maintain the essence of the traditional business, both have adapted to new times, with innovations such as cereal breads, spelt and rye and coloured breads, which they make by adding different edible dyes. “The essence is still the same, the secret is here,” he says while he lifts the cloth that covers a huge lump of sourdough, “the origin of everything”. “You won’t see this in supermarket bakeries, there the bread comes in deep-frozen, who knows what they add,” says Antonio. Since he was 19 he has lived “like an owl”. “I sleep from two to eight in the afternoon, work

starts at nine at night and we are there until six in the morning, kneading and baking bread every day of the year, except Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve, which is when we rest,” says this Nerja baker. He goes on to explain that 70 per cent of his business is based on servicing the local hospitality industry. “With the pandemic we have had a very bad time, but the situation is already improving a little,” he admits. On average, 1,500 loaves and

The pandemic has been a difficult time as 70 per cent of the business is from hotels etc

about 5,000 buns are made daily, using about 400 kilos of flour which comes from Granada and Seville. “It depends a lot on the season, in summer we work more,” he says. In addition to the different types and shapes of bread, when the Día de San Juan arrives, which is celebrated on June 24, they also prepare the traditional ‘tortas de aceite’. “We don’t make anything else, just that and the bread,” he clarifies. “A loaf of our bread costs one euro and it’s true that in the supermarket or in a greengrocer’s shop you can find two loaves for this price, but the flavour is not the same, far from it,” he says. “Good service and quality are our secret weapons,” adds Ramírez, who is “very proud” of the “great team we have”, made up of six employees. “My grand-

mother, Julia López, is 101 years old and still comes to see us work, it is with much pride that we maintain this traditional bakery after a hundred years,” says Ramírez. A little while ago, the neighbours’ association of Las Protegidas, close to the bakery in Calle San Miguel, paid tribute to them for this first century of their existence. **Passing on the baton** “My children are still young, the boy is 16 years old and the girl is 13, I do not know if they will want to dedicate themselves to this profession in the future, but I personally would not want to, it is a very demanding job,” he admits. A few metres from the bakery, some of his cousins are in charge of the Ramírez shop, founded in 1965, and which SUR in English’s sister paper, Diario SUR, reported on in 2015, when it was celebrated its first half-century selling traditional bread and pastries, for more than five decades in Nerja.

Private lives

ANDREW J. LINN



Unlike asking porn stars what sort of sex they practice when the cameras are not rolling, sommeliers usually give straight answers when they confess to what they enjoy drinking in private. The sommelier’s work schedule is unusually punishing, making their downtime

doubly precious, so what are their personal liquid treats? A recent survey of US sommeliers from top establishments shows them to be remarkably unconventional and some even off-the-wall. One enjoys nothing more than beer mixed with Campari, while another claims a

shot of gin with an IPA brings out the botanicals and floral notes of both. Back to earth with a lady sommelier from LA who thrives on Alsatian Riesling, and another who insists on drinking Beaujolais from a water glass. Another exclaims guiltily, “There is nothing wrong with drinking rosé.” A few somms, as they are usually referred to, prudently get their rocks off by drinking Cynar, an artichoke-based vermouth-style that people love or hate (it’s supposed to be good for the liver). First prize for variety must

surely go to a Hollywood sommm who alternates between wheat beer, sake, Tia María and Gatorade, although many simply enjoy nothing more than opening a few bottles of the sort of fine wines they serve in their normal line of duty. Since they themselves would have selected the wines that are featured on the wine list, restaurant suppliers are invariably delighted to slip them a few bottles of decent stuff now and then to take home. Nevertheless, the overall most popular choice is gin and tonic.

WINE OF THE WEEK
Pagos de Araiz Rosado 2020
It’s hard to select a ‘best wine’ when the competition is between rosados from Spain’s top rosé region, Navarra, but this 2020 vintage from the Bodegas Masaveu stable won this year’s event, beating 114 similar wines. Made from 100% Garnacha, it is very acceptable and value for money at around five euros.



2021: A successful year in Spanish sports

Subtlety. Without seemingly making much noise on the international stage, Spanish athletes from different sports accomplished great things throughout 2021



SHAY
CONAGHAN

As 2021 draws to a close, it's time to look back and reflect on all the sporting events of the year and the many Spanish athletes that had success. It was the year of postponed events, such as the Tokyo Olympics or Euro 2020, with other competitions going ahead as planned. So, how did Spaniards do in their respective sports?

OLYMPICS

Gold The least amount of gold medals since Athens 2004

In terms of finishing 1st place, it was Spain's worst gold medal tally since Athens 2004. In Greece they picked up the same amount as in Tokyo: just three.

Fátima Gálvez and Alberto Fernández shot their way- literally- to the country's first gold of the Games in the mixed trap team shooting event.

Thirty-nine-year-old Sandra Sánchez then extended her five-year podium streak by also finishing first in the kata leg of the karate event. A remarkable achievement for a woman that only began competing for Spain at the age of 34.

The proudest moment for the country was the debut victory of Alberto Ginés, who at the young age of 18 was able to take gold in



the Olympic debut of sport climbing, earning himself the nickname 'Spanish Spider-Man'.

Silver A total of eight silvers went Spain's way in Tokyo

While every athlete dreams of winning gold, some are also just as happy to finish second.

Damián Quintero, who grew up in Torremolinos, took his first silver Olympic medal in the same event as his compatriot, Sandra Sánchez, in the individual kata.

Ray Zapata took silver in the men's floor exercise. The Dominican-born Spaniard was tied with the Israeli gold medallist, but the judges awarded Zapata with silver, despite executing his routine better than his opponent.

Another stunning feat was Adriana Cerezo's silver in taekwondo. Cerezo was only 17 when she made the final, and the teenager was a mere seven seconds away from clinching what would have been an even more stunning gold medal.

Bronze Spanish bronze excellence

Spain picked up six bronze medals for the second consecutive Olympics.

Ana Peleteiro, who competes in the triple jump, launched herself 14.87 metres in the final to clinch third place, breaking two Spanish Olympic records in the process by 14 centimetres.

David Valero, who hails from Granada and who finished ninth in Rio 2016, took third in the cross-country cycling event.

Joan Cardona, who was also making his Olympic debut, stepped onto the podium as he took bronze in the Finn category of sailing.

Although 2021 was a year of postponed events, many Spanish athletes achieved success

◀ **Karate Gold**
Sánchez wins in Tokyo.
REUTERS

▲ **Golden boy**
18 year-old Alberto Ginés won a gold medal for Sport Climbing at the Olympics. REUTERS

Honorable mentions Not everyone came back with a medal

After her impressive performances at Rio 2016, where she picked up three bronzes and a gold medal, Mireia Belmonte only managed a fourth-place finish in the 400 metre individual medley; impressive enough for someone recovering from injury.

An injury proved to be too much for Lydia Valentín too as the 36-year-old weightlifter finished tenth in the 87kg category, using just two of her four attempts, managing a total of 225kg.

Long-distance runner Mo Katar was seven seconds away from picking up a medal in the 5,000 metres event, finishing eighth.

FOOTBALL

Malaga CF A turbulent year on and off the pitch

2021 was certainly a year most Malaga fans won't forget in a hurry.

Despite finishing December with some poor results, namely their recent defeat to Leganés and their early Copa del Rey exit, the Andalusian club is still in a position to fight for promotion in the second half of the season.

But before this most recent campaign got underway, the team had somehow managed to sur-

vive another year in Spain's second division with what was essentially a squad of youngsters and players who had to renegotiate their contracts. The team never dropped below 13th place until the second and third-last games of the season, ultimately finishing a respectable 12th.

Back to the ongoing campaign, it's clear Malaga still have areas to improve on the pitch, which hasn't been an easy task over the last few months. Injuries to key players such as captain Luis Muñoz, Juande, Ramón, Jozabed and Kevin has meant a dip in form.

The team went from being clear candidates to finish in promotion places- backed up by an unbeaten home record until December- to sitting further away from sixth than they would like.

Off the pitch, things only seem to have improved. Sheikh al-Thani was finally revoked of all control over the club, with the club administrator taking full control.

Moreover, a 40 million cash injection the Blue and Whites will receive from CVC Capital as part of a deal with LaLiga will also relieve fans, with things looking much better for 2022.

There is a slight hiccup at the moment, and that is that the club is currently banned by Fifa from signing players until summer 2023, a situation that





Bronze. Ana Peleteiro jumping. EP



WTA Trophy. Muguruza. AFP

winning team, Alexia Putellas, became the first female Spanish footballer to win the individual award, and the first Spanish footballer to win it since Luis Suárez in 1960.

TENNIS

A WTA winner Muguruza becomes first Spaniard to win WTA finals

Garbiñe Muguruza became the first ever Spaniard to win the WTA Finals, an end of season tournament contested by the sport's best players. Despite no Gran Slam wins, she still finished the year as world number three.

Tokyo Olympics

Pablo Carreño takes bronze

An impressive performance from Carreño at the Olympics saw him take third place and a bronze medal. The Spaniard knocked out world number 2 Daniil Medvedev in the quarter-finals, but lost in the following round. However, Carreño put on a stellar display of tennis in the bronze medal match, defeating World n°1 Novak Djokovic on route.

Local talent

Davidovich continues his progression

Alejandro Davidovich, from Malaga, continued to rise through the ranks in 2021.

His run in the Monte Carlo Masters was impressive. He achieved his first top ten win, beating Matteo Berrettini; before making his first ATP Masters 1000 quarter-finals, repeating the feat at the French Open for his first Gran Slam quarter-finals. He wasn't so lucky at the Olympics, where he lost to Novak Djokovic in the third round.

GOLF

US Open

Rahm wins first major title

In June, Jon Rahm became the first ever Spaniard to win the US Open. It was also his first major tournament win, which took him to the top of the rankings and earned him the PGA Player of the Year award.

OTHERS

Karate

Torres and Quintero triumph in Dubai

24-year-old María Torres, from Malaga, picked up a gold medal at the Karate World Championship in Dubai, while fellow local Damián Quintero picked up his third silver medal in a row, building on his second place finish at Tokyo 2020.

Formula 1

Sainz finishes best of the rest
Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz Jr. finished fifth in the World Drivers' Championship behind the other four drivers at Red Bull and Mercedes. Sainz bagged four podium results and finished ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and his Ferrari teammate Charles Leclerc.



A LOOK AT LA LIGA
ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports

An end-of-year round-up of Spanish football

Few clubs have been able to splash the cash and have called on homegrown talent



As La Liga clubs reflect on 2021, most will remember the year fondly, as the achievements have been shared across the country.

Only Barcelona will declare it as 'annus horribilis' amongst the major clubs, but the future looks much brighter at the Camp Nou.

Real Madrid will be delighted to be at the top heading into 2022 with Carlo Ancelotti wisely overseeing the transition and there's the prospect of Kylian Mbappe getting on-board in the summer.

Atletico may be underachieving right now but they can look back on a year when they claimed the title for only the second time in a quarter of a century.

Real Sociedad won their first silverware in 34 years by beating Basque rivals Athletic Bilbao in the Copa del Rey final which was held over from 2020. They also made a smart start to this campaign and have advanced to play RB Leipzig in the knockout stages of the Europa League.

Even Athletic Bilbao will be happy with playing two Copa finals in the space of a fortnight, although they lost both.

Villarreal finally claimed a title after many years of disrupting the big clubs. The night they outshot Manchester United in a Europa League final shoot-out that went to the 21st penalty will never be forgotten. They are continuing the European adventure in the Champions League with Juventus on the calendar.

Sevilla and Real Betis have both had a great year. Sevilla could improve on last year's fourth place and Real Betis, 6th last season, are also in the equation. Both will be representing Andalucía when European football reconvenes. Betis also have the top scoring Spaniard in Juanmi.

The most romantic story belongs to Rayo Vallecano. The humble Madrid club finished sixth in the Segunda, won the play-offs and somehow man-

aged to go into the break in fourth place. Just imagine Champions League football at their three-sided stadium off the beaten track in the capital.

As mentioned above, it has been a disastrous twelve months for FC Barcelona. The president was run out of office, his successor revealed a horrific financial state of affairs, and they couldn't offer their greatest player ever a new contract. Life after Messi has been miserable however the only way is up.

In adversity, Pedri, Gavi and Nico González have been fast-tracked to become first-team regulars. Uruguayan Ronald Araujo has developed into a top-class centre half, Ansu Fati will be back soon and Ferran Torres is on the radar. The future looks bright for new coach Xavi and the Spain national team who can draw on some incredible emerging talent who will be playing together week in and week out for the same club.

In conclusion, 2021 was a trying year for Spanish football clubs as they have been financially challenged by the pandemic. Few have been able to splash the cash – but, in many ways, that is a good thing. Coaches have been forced to call upon homegrown talent and that is proving healthy for Spanish football as the national team reached the finals of the Nations League and Olympics.

It may not be exactly out-with-the-old, but it's certainly a case of in-with-the-new. Happy New Year to you all.



Ronald Araujo. EFE

its representatives are trying to fix.

Spanish National team

A pleasantly surprising year for La Roja

Just over a decade ago, Spanish football fans were spoiled rotten after the national team had gone on an unprecedented run of dominance, winning three international competitions in a row between 2008 and 2012.

Since then, the team has had its ups and downs. Hopes going into 2021 weren't low, but not particularly high either. But manager Luis Enrique delivered on the big stage, against all odds and with very questionable decisions.

Spain made it to the Euro 2020 semi-final although La Roja narrowly missed out on making it to the final after losing to eventual winners Italy on penalties.

Then, a few months later, the national team got their revenge on the Italians by beating them

in the Nations League semi-final, before losing out to France in the final after a bizarre refereeing decision. Spain isn't even close to its heights of a decade ago, but this could be the start of their resurgence.

Spanish U-23s

Spanish silver for the youngsters in Tokyo

The Spanish team finished second at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, yet another surprise result for many.

The players, mostly U-23s, topped their group before going on to beat Ivory Coast and Japan in the quarter and semi-finals, respectively. The young La Roja side then faced-off against reigning champions Brazil in the final, but could not stop the South Americans from retaining their gold medal.

Ballon d'Or winner

Putellas wins first Ballon d'Or for Spanish women

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THE STARS




Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th
Mars in Sagittarius keeps your focus on teamwork, socialising and networking. You'll be in the best position to connect with some interesting people.




Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
You might need to put firmer boundaries in place this week as someone may persuade you to join in with something that is demanding.




Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Want to indulge your creativity, take up meditation or volunteer your spare time to help others? If it feels good and gives you a buzz, then put it on your list.




Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
You may have some noble ideas and bold plans on the go, but this week's ties to Neptune could encourage more soulful reflections.




Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
With Venus and Neptune in the picture, you'll find it easier to empathize with another. This upbeat mood can lead to you forgetting past difficulties.




Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Been in two minds about a relationship or inclined to doubt someone? By the end of this week you'll have a different perspective and be willing to give them a chance.




Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Mars in Sagittarius gives you extra fire that can be used to get a creative project up and running. You'll be looking for new adventures and opportunities to spread your wings.




Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
The boundaries between friendship and romance could become blurred, making it difficult to know what to do next. Bide your time for now Virgo, as things will be clearer later next week.




Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
Bogged down with family matters and uncertain what to do next? Putting your attention on something you enjoy can lift your spirits and get you thinking up solutions that might just work.



Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Have a lot of admiration for someone? You might be keen to break the ice. And if you find yourself spending too much time dreaming about what might be, snap to!

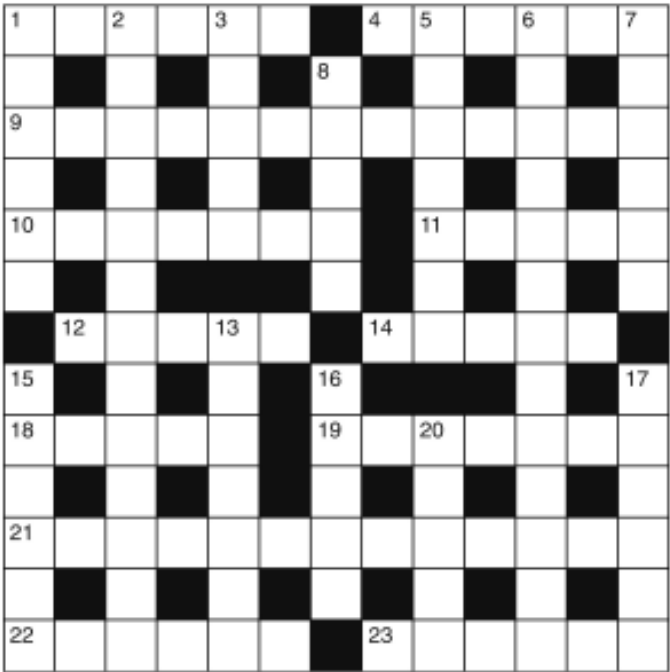


Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
Don't rush to buy items in the sale that you won't actually need, as it can be more important to keep that extra cash for now. Plus, the Quarter Moon could see you reaching a milestone.



Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
Your softer side could show up this week, making it difficult to say no when perhaps you should. Feelings of compassion mean you'll want to help, even if it means sacrificing your time.

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11494



Across

- 1 Having hair fastened up (6)
- 4 She comes out of the bar (6)
- 9 Murdered at night? That's a bit of guesswork (4,2,3,4)
- 10 Say sect could show rapturous emotion (7)
- 11 Get a different quote for headgear (5)
- 12 Vegetables often taken by the doctor (5)
- 14 The little brat never finishes playing for money (5)
- 18 A retrogressive attitude for one with a fabulous reputation! (5)
- 19 The sleuth somehow gets the right swindler (7)
- 21 But they're not built to accommodate rankers (7,6)
- 22 Arnold translated De Quincey's contemporary (6)
- 23 Drawing room used by broadcasters (6)

Down

- 1 Bound to be whipped (6)
- 2 Examine with peevish enquiry? (5-8)
- 3 From the border I can take the heath plant (5)
- 5 Choose artist for role in Greek tragedy (7)
- 6 Composed, using old-fashioned pen in strained arrangement (13)
- 7 It's used for encircling a low joint (6)
- 8 This garment doesn't move (5)
- 13 She reaches the highest range (7)
- 15 Redhead in the wrong place makes a bit of a bloomer (6)
- 16 How many are partly worth re-electing? (5)
- 17 Poster quickly amended (6)
- 20 Dauntless porter (5)

SUDOKU BY HANZO

Instructions
Complete the square making sure that every row of nine numbers includes all digits from 1 to 9, every column includes all digits from 1 to 9 and every 3 by 3 subsection includes all digits from 1 to 9

	4		5					
			3		1			5
3	2					8	1	9
	9	7				4		
				1	5	3	9	
	3			7	4		8	
		6		9		1		
			6	4		7	5	
8	7				2			4

THE WORDPUZZLER

S	T	I	B	C	L	O	U	I	S
O	R	M	E	N	O	R	N	I	P
R	E	I	A	Y	I	M	F	R	O
B	E	T	T	E	R	P	A	U	L
I	V	E	R	N	I	M	Y	N	I
L	A	D	I	O	N	N	E	X	T
L	L	U	X	A	G	O	A	O	R
Y	I	D	I	L	M	I	R	R	I
E	R	A	C	H	A	R	O	L	D
R	O	N	O	I	R	M	T	A	E

Can you identify the middle names by which the people listed below are better known?

- 1. Marie Warwick
- 2. Daniel Armstrong
- 3. Samuel Wilder
- 4. Ernst Bergman
- 5. James McCartney
- 6. Helen Potter
- 7. James Wilson
- 8. James Quayle
- 9. Dorothy Dunaway
- 10. Ruth Davis

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



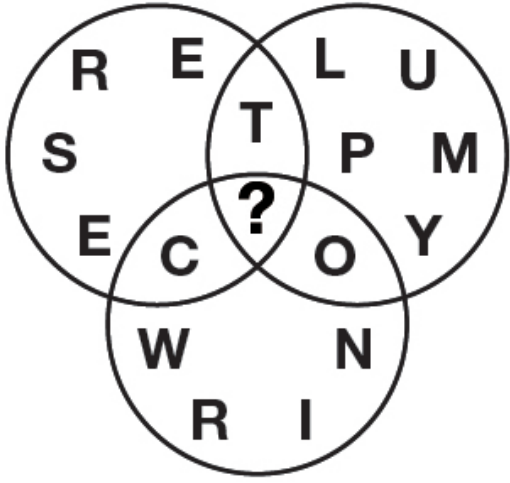
BATTLESHIPS

Instructions Find where the fleet of ships (1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines) are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some have been filled in to start you off.

- Battleship
- Cruiser
- Destroyers
- Submarines

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
A											3
B											0
C											4
D											2
E											1
F											3
G											1
H											2
I											3
J											1
	1	3	2	2	2	1	3	2	3	1	

CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

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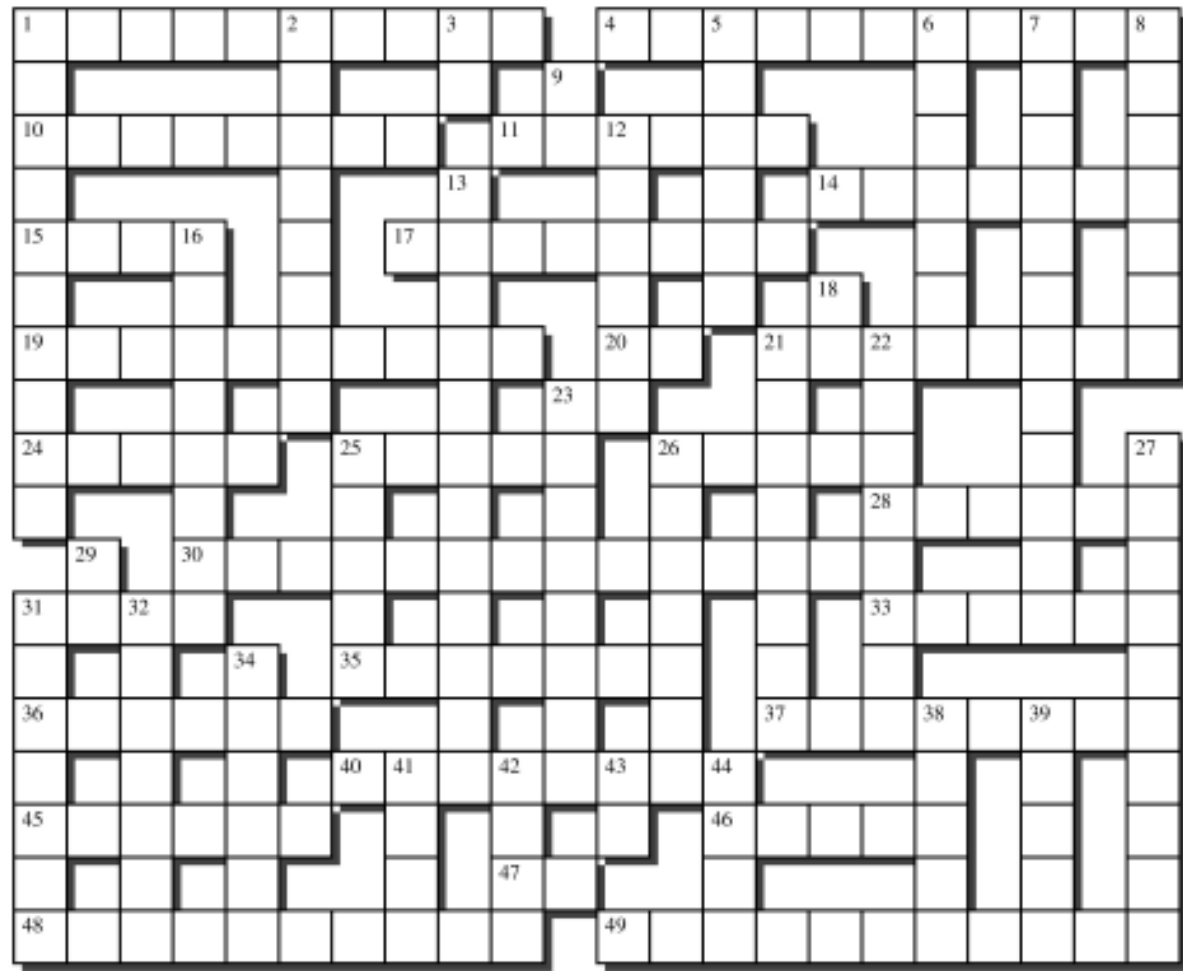


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LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD



Across

- 1) To replace (10)
- 4) Transaction (11)
- 10) Sold (f.pl) (8)
- 11) Daily (m) (6)
- 14) He trains (7)
- 15) Lute (4)
- 17) To overthrow (8)
- 19) Legal tender (5,5) (10)
- 20) I've (2)
- 21) Battered (m) (8)
- 23) Faith (2)
- 24) Bag (under eye) (5)
- 25) To bring (5)
- 26) Channel (5)
- 28) Injury (6)
- 30) Mainly (14)
- 31) Fashion (4)
- 33) Horror (6)
- 35) Aviator (7)
- 36) Nation (6)
- 37) Anxiety (8)
- 40) Winner (f) (8)
- 45) Money (6)
- 46) Thousands (5)
- 47) I gave (2)
- 48) Substituted (m) (10)
- 49) Circulation (11)

Down

- 1) Revolution (10)
- 2) Brick (8)
- 3) Ace (2)
- 5) Friends (f) (6)
- 6) Costly (m) (7)
- 7) To exchange (12)
- 8) Dire (m) (7)
- 9) My (2)
- 12) Last night (6)
- 13) Disappearance (12)
- 16) She disagrees (8)
- 18) From (2)
- 21) Resignation (8)
- 22) Banknotes (8)
- 23) Coldness (8)
- 25) Tense (f) (5)
- 26) To buy (7)
- 27) They introduce (10)
- 29) I (2)
- 31) Coins (7)
- 32) Dozens (7)
- 34) I smiled (6)
- 38) He urges (5)
- 39) I slept (5)
- 41) Here (4)
- 42) I walk (4)
- 43) You (pl) (2)
- 44) To love (4)

QUIZ

Where is it a tradition to blacken the eye of a doll on New Year's Eve?

1. Denmark 2. Russia 3. Japan
4. China



Where is it a tradition to put a gold ring in your drink on New Year's Eve?

1. Mexico 2. Russia 3. China
4. Belgium

Where is it a tradition to jump off a chair on New Year's Eve?

1. Denmark 2. Poland 3. Japan
4. China

THE SUR IN ENGLISH COLUMN

The end of another year

It doesn't seem possible that a year has passed since the last New Year's message, but here we are again. Hopefully you all had a great Christmas and are preparing to welcome in the New Year tonight. As usual this year has brought a mix of good and bad news. The ongoing Covid pandemic has overshadowed everything else, although it was pushed back stage just for a little while with the news of the eruption of Cumbre Vieja volcano in La Palma. However, the Christmas holiday period continues until the visit from the Magi on 5 January, and there's still time to celebrate the good news from the last 12 months. So don't forget to make sure you pick twelve of the smallest grapes and have a wish ready for that final stroke of midnight.

We wish all our readers a happy and prosperous 2022 and would love to hear your news and views so contact us Email: surinenglish.su@diariosur.es or simply Tweet them to us @SUR_English

ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Answer: Japan
A new daruma doll with blank eyes is purchased each year. The left eye is filled in while making a wish. The other eye is filled in when the wish comes true. At the end of the year the dolls are burned.
Answer: Mexico.
A gold ring, or other item of gold jewelry, in the bottom of the glass when you drink a toast to the New Year promises prosperity.
Answer: Denmark
Of interest: In Denmark, it is a tradition to jump off a chair at the stroke of midnight. Everyone gets up on a chair and, at the stroke of midnight, jumps off, signifying a leap into the new year and the leaving behind of evil spirits.

Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is H. Chester, Plymouth, Norwich, all English cities.

Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Locked; 4 Bertha; 9 Shot in the dark; 10 Ecstasy; 11 Toque; 12 Pulse; 14 Gamin; 18 Aesop; 19 Hustler; 21 Private houses; 22 London; 23 Studio. Down: 1 Lashed; 2 Cross-question; 3 Enca; 5 Electra; 6 Transliterated; 7 Ankle; 8 Stays; 13 Soprano; 15 Carpet; 16 Three; 17 Pireto; 20 Stout.

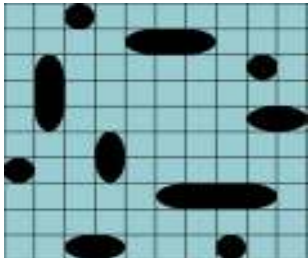
Wordpuzzler solution

1. Dionne
2. Louis
3. Billy
4. Ingmar
5. Paul
6. Beatrix
7. Harold
8. Dan
9. Faye
10. Bette

Language Crossword

ACROSS:
1. BLOIS
2. RENAISSANCE
3. LAFAYETTE
4. BETTER
5. PAUL
6. LADY
7. LUXAGOR
8. LILIA
9. FAYE
10. BETTE
11. DIOR
12. LUIS
13. DAN
14. HAROLD
15. BEATRICE
16. INGMAR
17. PAUL
18. LAFAYETTE
19. RENAISSANCE
20. BLOIS

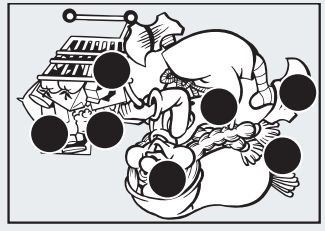
Battleships



Sudoku solution

8	7	3	1	5	2	9	6	4
9	1	2	6	4	3	7	5	8
4	5	6	7	9	8	1	3	2
2	3	1	9	7	4	5	8	6
6	8	4	2	1	5	3	9	7
5	9	7	8	3	6	4	2	1
3	2	5	4	6	7	8	1	9
7	6	9	3	8	1	2	4	5
1	4	8	5	2	9	6	7	3

The seven differences



Waves of silver for Sarah Almagro

Surfer. The 21-year-old from Marbella, whose hands and feet were amputated due to meningitis, came second in the ISA World Para-Surfing Championship in California

ANA JIMÉNEZ



Two shades of blue form the fine line of the horizon between the sea and the sky. Sarah Almagro, who is just 21 years old, surfs the waves that rise above the line and lift her almost high enough to touch the clouds above, as she did at the ISA World Para-Surfing Championship at Pismo Beach in California. The colour of her silver medal shimmers as she picks it up with her prosthesis to show it to the camera with a huge smile on her face: "I wanted to win, I'm not going to pretend that I didn't, but it doesn't matter. To me, this silver still feels like gold," she says.

Without losing her smile, she tells the story of her life, how at the age of 18 she contracted meningitis and her hands and feet had to be amputated, but she never lost the desire to continue the body surfing which she had been practising in Marbella since she was five.

"My current trainer heard that I used to go surfing from his beach. When he learned all about my illness and what happened, he told me he would get me back into the water again," she says.

Her coach is a great boost for Sarah, in the most literal sense of the world, because he is the

one with whom she takes her first steps into the sea from the shore: "I don't have enough mobility or strength because I don't have the palms of my hands to push myself alone. I always need help to get into the water and for everything once I'm in the water," she explains.

With the help of her trainer and her own determination, she went from the beaches of Malaga to those of California where, apart from the competition itself, she mixed with surfers of different abilities, where someone who is blind helps an amputee to put on their prosthesis, on a beach which has been perfectly adapted to their needs and where everything is like the American surfing films: "The cars were enormous and there were elderly people with white beards riding Harley Davidsons. I loved it. It was the first time I had been to the United States," she says.

Something else she will always remember was being selected to represent Spain, chosen to read out the athletes' oath and take part in the opening parade at her first World Championship. "It was



Sarah won a silver medal at the Para-Surfing Championships in California. SUR



be a girl pushing my wheelchair, but in the end I walked and pushed the chair in front of me," she says.

Even with so many highlights, one of her favourite moments was when she found herself surfing with seals: "On one occasion when my trainer was in the water with me, as he was coming to collect me, I started surfing on my own and suddenly I lifted my head up and saw a seal. I screamed with

such an honour for me. We were a bit naughty in the parade, too.

excitement. I was freaking out with joy," she says.

The flight home was also a performance. As Sarah was arriving at Madrid, her suitcases with all her belongings, including the medal, had ended up in Helsinki, Finland. "We had two connections between Los Angeles and Madrid and we missed one of them. My case containing the medal and the laptop I had used to do my university work while I was in Los Angeles went astray. I had to do all the work again because it was very close to the deadline," she says, between laughter and relief at finally being reunited with her case and

having her possessions at home.

Law student

Sarah is studying law at Malaga university. At first she wanted to be a tax inspector but now she is trying to change direction and do something related to sport, to combine her two vocations. As well as having made a name for herself as the world runner-up in adapted surfing, she has a strong presence on social media, although she doesn't like the term 'influencer'. "I don't know, I think that is seen as someone who posts photos and that's it. I try to be visible, to transmit a normality in what may not be normal. I try to do it with humour, because I think that gets the best response," she says.

The sparkle in her eyes, like the sun shining on the waves, hints that the road to a silver medal in a world championship, studying law and being immersed in her projects has had its highlights, but meningitis still brings shadows in its wake. "I had a really bad time and I have been very, very afraid. I used to think I would be useless for the rest of my life," she says.

Today, with her silver medal in her hand, her perspective is different and she speaks of the future, of what she is going to do and what she hopes she will be able to do: "I have been thinking for a while about writing a book, but you need to have the time and want to relive the past, and when you have experienced so much fear that isn't an easy thing to do," she says.

In any case, whether she ends up writing the story of her life or not, she knows that her experience needs to be told so others have an example which may help them. "I'd like to start holding conferences to transmit the message that everyone can get over any situation, you don't have to be Sarah or anybody special to overcome adversity. Everyone is capable of doing it," she says.

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